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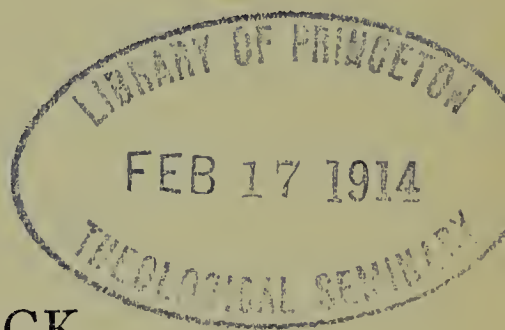
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HUMANITY AND GOD

BY

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SAMUEL CHADWICK



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LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

Butler and Tanner The Setwood Printing Works Frome and London

TO
MY WIFE'S MOTHER
AND
MINE ALSO
BOTH OF WHOM GAVE ME OF
THEIR BEST

A PERSONAL WORD

ON the first Sunday in the year 1903, a few friends were sitting round the fire after supper talking, as preachers will, of sermons and the work of God. The conversation was very frank and brotherly, and turned finally upon my own work. My friends reproached me for ignoring their oft-repeated entreaties that I would publish a volume of sermons. I replied that it had been a fixed rule of my life to regard an open door as an essential element in a call, and for this I had no call. Then I was asked what I would regard as a call of God. I answered at once and without much thought, "An unsolicited request from Hodder and Stoughton." The subject dropped, as the condition was thought unreasonable.

Within twenty-four hours the request came. No one had communicated with the publishers ; and there was only one answer possible.

The sermons selected were preached from notes as a series in the regular course of my ministry ; and afterwards at the Southport Convention, and the Northfield Conference. That explains some omissions and some repetitions. An underlying unity runs through the series, yet each sermon had to be practically complete in itself.

It is impossible to make adequate acknowledgment of the sources of my indebtedness. I am sure there is nothing in these pages I have not received. Through an exceptionally busy life I have striven to give attention to reading, and what I have read has passed into the fibre and substance of my work. If I have unconsciously wronged any who have been my helpers and teachers, I shall be sorry to have given so blundering an expression to my appreciation and thanks.

I send forth these sermons deeply conscious of their limitations and imperfections. Two things comfort me—a sentence I read many years ago, “A sharp spear needs no polish”; and the fact that every one of these sermons has been blessed of God to many souls. My only prayer concerning them is, that they may be blessed in print as they were blessed in speech, and that Christ’s Name may be glorified.

S. CHADWICK.

LEEDS.

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And in His Name shall the Gentiles hope.”

—*S. Matt. xii. 18-21.*

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“And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain.

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HUMANITY AND GOD

“Ye shall be as God.”—*Gen.* iii. 5.

“Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.”—*S. Matt.* v. 48.

HUMANITY AND GOD

CHRIST and Satan make their appeal to man from the same basis. They both assume his correspondence with the Divine nature and his capacity for Divine fellowship. God-likeness is recognised as his destiny. Satan prevailed in Eden by assuring man that he should be as God ; Jesus opened His ministry with the promise that His followers should be perfect as the Father in Heaven. "Ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil," whispered Satan ; "Ye shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect" is the still larger promise of the Son of God. This coincidence provokes the inquiry, Is it possible man can be as God ? Is this a lie on the lips of the Tempter, and mere hyperbole on the lips of Jesus ?

IT IS A PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF ITS POSSIBILITY THAT IT IS ASSUMED BY SUCH OPPOSITE PERSONALITIES AS CHRIST AND SATAN.

Antagonism more complete than theirs it is impossible to conceive. They are as light and

darkness, life and death, Heaven and Hell. There is no basis of concord between them. The settled policy and dominant motive of the Devil is to malign and slander God ; the mission of Jesus is to reveal and glorify God. Yet, slanderer and revealer, maligner and glorifier take common ground as to man's capacity and destiny. Jesus does not contradict the assertion of Satan, neither does Satan challenge the assurance of Jesus. God is represented in the Book of Genesis as endorsing the statement of the Devil, saying, " Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil," and Christ's promise of man's conformity with God lies at the very foundation of New Testament teaching. One sought the destruction of man and the other his salvation, but they both seek to prevail by appealing to his instinctive consciousness of a Divine destiny. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to conclude that a basis agreed upon by such antagonists may be accepted as real and sound. Whatever differences there may be in motive there is a common choice of the assumed fact that man may become as God. The appeal of both is to man's instinct for the Divine.

I. IN WHAT SENSE MAY MAN BE AS GOD ?

There is clearly a radical difference between the promise of Satan and that of Jesus. The scenes of temptation in the Garden and the Wilderness

are the key to the Devil's meaning. To Eve he promised the possession of God-like knowledge ; to Jesus, the Last Adam, he offered the possession of God-like power. Knowledge is divine, and power belongeth unto God. There is no wrong in knowing, not even in knowing good and evil. The only evil possible to knowledge is getting it by evil means. Knowledge acquired in the path of duty is a sacred possession, but knowledge gained by disobedience covers with shame. It is intended we shall know, and know even as God knows, but the knowledge of evil that comes by the experience of evil is a knowledge that darkens by enlightening. As man's eyes open to evil by disobedience, they shut to God. Only the pure can have knowledge of evil and live. The words of Satan had a different meaning on his lips from that they conveyed to the ears of Eve. The way to knowledge is not by transgression but by obedience. It is by willing to do that we come to know.

The proposals to Jesus offer the possession of power that shall secure from suffering, exempt from limitation, and exact service and homage. If a Son of God, why hunger ? If a Son of God, why bound by natural limitations ? If a Son of God, why serve and toil ? Conquer and command ! Such a conception of Divine authority and power assumes lawlessness in God. It

conceives Him as omnipotent to gratify every desire without reserve or regard. It is not an uncommon conception of the Divine prerogative. God is often envied as a magician of endless resource and power, exempt from all the limitations of law. Even Christian men covet unlimited wealth and flatter themselves with imaginary philanthropies, which simply means that if they had God's resources they would improve on God's administration. We often believe that God could do wonders if He would, and we are quite sure we would if we could. There is no lawlessness in Omnipotence. God is the most law-abiding Person in His universe. The God that can wish and it is done, does not exist outside man's imagination. The power of God we may have, but that power is never capricious, lawless, or self-glorying. The kingdoms of the world and their glory we may possess, but never by bowing to the Devil and going forth to crush and grab. These come by another way, and that way is pointed out to us in the promise of Christ.

God-like possessions are inseparable from God-like qualities. "Ye shall be perfect": that is the way to divinity's throne. The correspondence is not in natural attributes but in moral qualities. Perfection is through sonship, and sonship is by spiritual affinity and moral correspondence. The promise of perfection marks

the climax of an ethical development which assumes discipleship as a basis. The law is spiritual, and evil cherished in the heart is sin. The soul must be clean. Self-sacrifice is the law of life, and every evil thing must be cut off and cast away. Personal wrongs must be borne in meekness, and a cheerful obedience must be given to commands that may be unjustly imposed. A generous excess over exact requirement must mark the conduct, and beneficence must not be restricted to merit and appreciation. These moral qualities are necessary that we may be sons of our Father which is in Heaven. To those who are thus sons is this promise of perfection. Capacity does not always attain to realisation, but it constitutes an obligation. Correspondence of nature demands correspondence of character. Only they are truly sons who are sons indeed. They shall be as God; not in every conceivable attribute of divinity, nor of equal excellence in degree, but in every moral grace and glory we shall be of one quality with Him. We shall be righteous, merciful, and holy, even as He.

S. Matt.
v. 45.

The sum of the Divine character is love. God is love. Love also is the fulfilling of the law. In love man finds the Divine perfection. The Sermon on the Mount is the interpretation of the law in the light of love. The Beatitudes set forth the character based upon and inspired by

love. Love sees the spirit behind the letter and obeys. Love sees the mercy of mercilessness in sacrifice, and cuts off the offending limb that the life may be saved. Love suffers all things and is kind. Love delights to bless, and yearns most tenderly over the least worthy. Love perfects all things and is itself the sum of all perfection. "Love is of God, and every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God." The perfect in love are perfect with the perfection of God.

II. THE POSSIBILITY OF GOD-LIKENESS IS GUARANTEED IN THE CORRESPONDENCE OF NATURE BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

That correspondence lies deeper than external similarity. It is a correspondence of Nature that amounts to oneness with God. Many of our difficulties have arisen from regarding the two Natures as dissimilar, if not antagonistic and irreconcilable. We have looked upon God as radically different from ourselves, remote from all that was vital to our humanity, and alien to all the instincts of our nature. He has been feared and shunned as the one who above all others speaks of love, but spoils our programmes and robs us of our pleasant things. It is not that men suspect Him of malice or mocking, but it seems as if, from sheer lack of sympathy and knowledge of our nature, He inevitably comes

into human life only to disturb and destroy. Providence has come to be the invariable explanation of hardship and disappointment in trouble and sorrow. Such conceptions need only to be expressed to reveal how false they are. God is not diverse and remote, much less antagonistic. He is nigh at hand and so completely of one nature with man that He shares his sorrow and joy. Of His people it is said : "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them : In His love and in His pity He redeemed them ; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old." *Isa. lxiii. 9.*

The sense of this nearness is the great lack of our souls. We have suffered not from the intimacy but from the remoteness of our God. To multitudes He is little more than a shadowy presence somewhere far away in the Heavens. They think of Him dreamily in His glory, and seek His favours in the hour of despair. There can be but little passion for things in the dim distance, and no enthusiasm for a personality wrapped in mystery and awe. With such a conception of God, prayer in its purest exercise is impossible. Even with earthly friendships the length and frequency of correspondence is influenced by the distance it has to travel. It seems impossible to write a short letter when it has to travel six thousand miles, and equally impossible to write very often. God

is to many little more than a foreign correspondent dwelling in some far-away, unknown land, to be addressed with restraint, and sought when in need. It makes a tremendous difference when the soul realises that God is not far away but nigh at hand, not a shrouded mystery but a living personality, not an unsympathetic embodiment of power but a loving and tender Father.

Man need never be afraid of finding himself too near to God ; and nothing has done more to keep him at a distance than the failure to realise the oneness of God's Nature with his own. God made man in His own image. That image is not in the machinery of man's bodily organism. The man is the thinking, willing personality at the back of all that. The power that is behind brain, and nerve, and muscle, that is the man. Call him soul, spirit, or what you please, there is the quality that constitutes manhood, and that is the man God first made in His own image. That is the man in whom lies that which is of the very being of God. The "image" is more than mere likeness ; it is a facsimile. Jesus is "the image of God," "the very image of His substance." An exact and precise counterpart is the idea it conveys, and man was created the counterpart of God. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him ? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him ? For Thou hast made him

Heb. i. 3.

*Ps. viii.
4, 5.*

but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honour."

The process of creation secured his affinity with the Creator. Man is not the result of adaptation and fusion, but the creation of a vital process. God breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul. This cannot mean less than that God imparted to man of the innermost quality of His own being, and that imparted quality is man's distinctive nature. Man and God share the same living essence and are of one quality of nature. This does not mean that God is nothing more than a magnified man or that man is a miniature God; but it does mean that God is all that man is, and infinitely more. Whatever is an essential quality of manhood, man may find in his God. *Gen. ii. 7*

Preaching one day in the open air, I quoted the passage in Genesis about God making man in His own image, when a man interrupted and asked if I would accept an amendment to the text. He suggested that to be true to the facts of the case the passage should read: "And man said, Let us make God in our image, after our likeness." He denied that God was the Maker of man, and affirmed that man was the maker of God. The objection was greeted with applause. It was not new. I had been accustomed to hear it from secularist platforms in my youth. It

is an objection that has the daring and smartness that appeals to a crowd, and has in it just enough truth to make it difficult to answer to an open-air audience. So I promptly accepted the amendment and proceeded to prove he was wrong. Anthropomorphism is not untrue. It is only false when it imposes the limitations of humanity upon divinity, and imparts to God the baser things, which are not the essence but the accretions of our manhood. For, after all, there can be no revelation of personality except through personal consciousness. Consequently man cannot know God except as he finds Him within his own personality. “The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart.” No man finds God in Nature who has not first found Him in his own soul. So the revelation of God to man comes to us through the Man Christ Jesus. God and man meet in the One Person. There is no sharp dividing line. Man and God are not diverse but one.

The definition of this relationship is completed in the revelation of Jesus. God is our Father. That the Fatherhood of God is not something different from human fatherhood is evident from His use of the one to illustrate the other. “Of which of you that is a father shall his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask

Rom. x. 8.

*S. Luke
xi. 11-13.*

an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Jesus revealed God by identifying Him with the life of man. God and man are Father and son. Whatever the mysteries involved, father and son must be of one nature. As the father's very being lives in the being of his child, so is the very being of God in the being of man. The son proceeds from the innermost depths of the father's life. Here we find bedrock. Whatever else God may be, He is our Father and we are His children. As the son is of the same quality of nature as the father, so is man of one nature with God. There may be much in the Father beyond the comprehension of His child, but at any rate the child can cling, and looking up into His face can say: "Thou art my Father and my God." That will do. For the rest we can wait.

This revelation comes to man in his sin. By sin, God's image in man is defaced but not erased. Mercy arrested the curse which grace removed. The Lamb of God has taken away the sin of the world. The "much more" of the covenant of grace more than repeals the covenant of death. Man's sonship is redeemed in the blood of the Son. The fact of sin, therefore, does not affect the argument. It leaves the conclusion undis-

turbed, and only exalts the wonder and glory of God. Sin notwithstanding, the Divine element still remains, and sin destroyed, man is raised to conscious fellowship with the Divine nature. The destruction of sin restores manhood to its true level.

III. THAT MAN MAY BE AS GOD REACHES ITS HIGHEST CERTAINTY IN THE FACT OF THE INCARNATION.

God has become man in the person of Jesus Christ. In some quarters that may be challenged ; but if there is one thing that is clear in the New Testament, it is that Jesus and God are One. He is God “manifest in the flesh” ; “the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance.” What light that sheds upon the essential quality of man’s nature ! How real must be the correspondence between God and man, to make it possible without loss of identity or break of continuity for God to become man ! The Son of God is truly man in every essential of manhood, yet very God of very God. He is the perfect example of manhood : the last Adam ; the truly Representative Man. He is man as man was destined to be.

We have separated the Christ from ourselves even as we have separated the Father, and persist in thinking and speaking of Him as removed from us by a difference in nature. That He has

¹ *Tim.*
iii. 16.
Heb. i. 3.

a quality of Sonship all His own is quite true, but He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, made in all things like unto His brethren. As God is our Father, so Christ is our Brother. We are begotten of the One Father. When we speak of two Natures in Christ we speak of necessity the language of mystery and accommodation, but we are certainly not warranted in dividing the Christ against Himself. To speak of some things as limited to His Humanity, and of others as peculiar to His Divinity, is without warrant and without sense. There is no duality in Him. He is one and indivisible. We have no ground for supposing that His experience of hunger, weariness, and suffering differed in any sense from our own. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmity, and was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He was one with man. He became man. *Heb. iv. 15.*

Between this man Christ Jesus and God there was no antagonism. He was as truly one with God as He was one with men. He believed and declared Himself to be one with the Father. Here again we have divided to our hurt. As we have separated God from ourselves so we have antagonised Father and Son. A false theology has slandered and caricatured God by representing Him as a relentless Shylock grimly exacting extreme penalty from an innocent Son. The

result is that the Son is loved and the Father feared. The unspoken creed of many is summed up in the words : " I love Jesus, but I fear God."

The story is told of a Christian worker who was shocked at the answer received from a dying widow to the assurance of God's fatherly care for the widow and the fatherless. The dying woman raised herself upon her bed and entreated : " Do not talk about God. I am afraid of God. I hate God. Every hard and bitter thing in my life has come from God." Quietly the exhausted woman was allowed to recover strength. Then the Christian began to speak of Jesus. " Ah ! yes," said the dying woman, " He's different, isn't He ? He was so good and kind I like to hear about Him. I could trust Him." *Different ?* No, He is not different. And yet what that woman said I have heard in effect a thousand times. It seems a dreadful thing to have to say, but it needs to be said, that Jesus is not better than God. He is not different ; they are One. When Philip asked that they might see the Father, Jesus answered out of a grieved heart : " Have I been so long time with you and dost thou not know Me, Philip ? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me ? " No, He is not different. God is not only as good as Jesus, but infinitely transcends all that Jesus

revealed of Him, for there is a glory yet to be revealed. We have failed to catch the significance of the fact that the Son is the Father's gift to the world. He was in the Son. All that it cost the Son to redeem the world it cost the Father. He suffered in the suffering Son. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." They were not in conflict, they were not dissimilar; they are One.

2 Cor.
iv. 19.

As Christ was one with God, so we are called to be one with Christ. Everybody admits that. It is the one end of our calling, the ultimate result of discipline, and the final perfection of grace, that "we shall be like Him." But He is God, and if He is one with God, then oneness with Him must mean oneness with God. "Ye, therefore, shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

1 John
iii. 2.

IV. THIS MUST BE POSSIBLE BECAUSE IT IS NECESSARY.

Only the God-like enter Heaven. The necessity for holiness is based on the character of God. "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy"; and without holiness "no man shall see the Lord."

1 Pet.
i. 16.

Heb. xii.
14.

The change in the Revised Version has been welcomed with a sigh of relief. The promise seems much more hopeful than a command. The imperativeness of that imperative perfection made us shudder. But though the tense is

altered the imperativeness remains. The promise is a command. The promise is for present possession and the command for immediate obedience.

This is our high and holy calling in Christ Jesus ; this is the Divine purpose in the creation and redemption of man ; this is the gracious and glorious end of both providence and grace ; this is the imperative demand of the Divine character and the condition of Divine fellowship ; this is the crown of man's perfection and the sum of man's glory, that we are partakers of the Divine Nature and one with God in the glories of His perfection.

SIN AND GRACE

“Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.”
—*Rom. v. 20.*

SIN AND GRACE

SIN and grace are the two great words of the Christian Religion. They lie at the very heart of the Gospel of Christ. To fail in the understanding of the one is to miss the meaning of the other. Wrong views of sin always issue in false interpretations of grace. The Epistle to the Romans has come to be regarded as the very core of the Gospel, because it deals so completely with these two fundamental words. The fifth chapter sums up the great exposition in its broadest issues as represented in Adam and Christ. Between these two there is a parallel and a contrast; a parallel in the representative character of their works, and a contrast in the operation and issues of their representative acts. The sin of Adam involved the whole race in ruin; the righteousness of Christ restored men to the justification of life. That is the parallel. Apart from any consent or effort, all men are involved in the curse of the first and the atonement of the second. The act of the one is the act of all, and the results

of the act are shared by all. The contrast is set forth in the five times "much more" of the chapter. The disobedience of Adam spread sin over the whole race, the obedience of Christ gathered the sins of all unto Himself. From Paradise there went forth the stream of death; from Calvary there flows the river of life. The grace of God in Christ has cancelled sin and destroyed the works of the Devil. Grace has abounded over sin.

The chapter sums up this teaching in five facts about sin, five facts about Jesus Christ, and five facts about grace.

CONCERNING SIN :

That sin came through Adam's transgression; that death came by sin; that Adam's sin involved the whole race; that this racial guilt did not destroy any man's personal responsibility; that sin and death obtained universal dominion.

CONCERNING CHRIST :

That He stands to the race as its Second Representative and Head; that He died for the ungodly; that He rose again from the dead; that the virtue of His obedience is transmitted to those for whom He died; that through Him is imparted the gift of grace which is His own eternal life.

CONCERNING GRACE :

That in Christ the ungodly are justified freely

by His grace ; that by fellowship with Him we are made righteous before God ; that salvation is of grace and not of works ; that as salvation restores to righteousness, so by righteousness man regains his regal dominion in life ; that grace abounds beyond the ravages of sin.

Taking the first and third of these sets of facts we have stated the Christian doctrines of sin and grace.

I. THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF SIN.

The Bible always deals with man as a sinful being. The fact of sin explains the process of Divine Revelation and the whole economy of Redemption. The Law came to make sin manifest and to correct man's transgression. Every part of the sacred ordinances proceeded on the assumption of man's guilt and his need of cleansing. If man be not sinful, the whole Scripture is without meaning and the Gospel a delusion. The Book that gives unique distinction to man in his creation, tells of his transgression and humiliation. According to its account man failed to attain his destiny. He grasped at divinity by forbidden means and fell from his high estate. The bond of fellowship with the Divine was broken, and from kinship with God he fell to kinship with Satan. His understanding was darkened and his heart hardened. From

the realm of the spirit he descended to that of the flesh. The symmetry of his nature was broken and its order reversed. Instead of unity there was conflict within him. That which should have governed became captive, and that which was meant for service assumed control. Confusion took the place of harmony, and chaos succeeded a well-ordered cosmos.

There are many witnesses to confirm this Scriptural account of man's sinfulness. Every religion deals with man as a transgressor, for whose sin atonement must be made. Every conception of religion begins with the fact of sin. There is absolute unanimity in this in every grade of religious belief and ordinance. Not religion only, but every organisation of human life has to begin by reckoning with sin. Laws are passed, penalties fixed, and prisons built, on the assumption that sin exists wherever men are found.

The development of modern thought has brought confirmation to many phases of Biblical teaching about sin, that were long the sport of unbelievers. The orthodox interpretations of facts may still be despised, but to the facts themselves it bears ungrudging witness. Theological formulæ appear under such scientific terms as heredity, solidarity, and the survival of the fittest. They teach no more than the Scriptures

have taught from the beginning, but we welcome their testimony to the fact and operations of sin. But if there were no other witness every man would be able to furnish his own. "I have sinned" is so universal, that we are driven to the conclusion that "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Rom.
iii. 23.

Many attempts are made to account for sin's origin in man. Some have contended that it is inherent in nature and inseparable from the flesh. Others urge that it is an incident of his growth, an inevitable stage in the process of his evolution, out of which he will grow as a child passes beyond infantile maladies. According to these there was no fall. At most it may have been a failure to rise, but it is more than likely "the fall was a fall upward." That is the scientific way of falling! In the Scriptural account man was made a little lower than God and fell; in the scientific account he is made a little higher than the brute, but is rising all the time. In the one, sin is regarded as alien to man's nature, a foreign element, which is no true part of his manhood; in the other, it is a necessary factor in man's development from which he may never hope to be entirely free.

The Bible does not concern itself with the fall but with the fallen. It comes not to explain but to emancipate, not to philosophise but

to save. It explains only where the explanation is deemed necessary to the salvation. The forgetfulness of this simplicity of Scriptural aim leads to much confusion. Stripped of all accessories of allegorical speech, the simple account is that sin entered through the acceptance of evil by the free will of man. Whatever the circumstances, this is the inner reality—man chose evil. There can be no other explanation of the ultimate fact. Without the free choice there could have been no sin. Evil can become possessed of the quality of sin only when it is man's free choice. Where there is no choice there can be no sin. After all the searching criticism of the Genesis story, in all its essentials it stands as the only rational and adequate explanation of the evil that is in man, and his consequent need of Redemption.

WHAT IS SIN ?

We are on sure ground when we come to the Scriptures for the answer as to its nature and consequences. St. John defines sin as lawlessness. That is the final definition. It tracks sin to its innermost secret, and comprehends all the facts of its manifold operations. Sin is not an act but an attitude. The offence is not only in the transgression but in the intention ; not merely in the violation of law but in the disposition of the heart

Christ emphasised this in the Sermon on the

¹ *John* iii.
4.

Mount. Anger is murder in malice and motive. Lust is adultery though it never pass beyond the look of desire. The seat of sin is in the will. Man is judged not by what he does, but by what he wills to do. Intention determines quality. The same words may be a term of affection or a stinging insult. The motive makes all the difference. A blow may be an act of friendly playfulness or a challenge to deadly combat; the heart at the back of the hand settles which it is. There is many a thief who never steals. Lawlessness may stop short of transgression but it is the lawlessness that is sin. Man is not a sinner because he is a transgressor; he is a transgressor because he is a sinner. The sin of lawlessness precedes the act of transgression. Disobedience in act is the effect of which lawlessness is the cause. It is not a question of any one commandment but the disposition of the heart to the Giver of them all.

This definition of sin explains a fact and a passage. The fact is the variation in transgression, and the passage is James ii. 10. Sin is the revolt of man against the authority of God; that is the essential fact. Different men carry their revolt into practice by breaking different commandments. The same man rarely, if ever, breaks them all. Indeed men are generally very proud of the commandments

they keep, and have no sympathy with men who are vicious on lines where they themselves are virtuous. The drunkard will often boast of his chastity, the immoral man is thankful he is not a thief, and the profane swearer flatters himself that he never lies. As a matter of fact none have any room for boasting. That the drunkard is not an adulterer, the immoral man a thief, and the swearer a liar, is simply an accident of temperament and circumstance. When we go astray we turn "*every one to his own way.*" Given the conditions of desire and opportunity, the man who breaks one commandment would break any one in the Decalogue. The particular point at which we trespass is a matter of small importance; that we should defy God's boundary at all is the offence. The sliding scale of society is not recognised in the judgments of Heaven. It is the sin at the back of the sins that does the mischief; the sin in desire, intention, and will. Sin is lawlessness, and lawlessness is sin, whether it assume a virtuous or a vicious form. Man is judged not by his acts but by his heart.

This silences for ever the scorn that has been poured on Adam's Apple. The significance of an act cannot be measured by the value of the thing that gave the occasion. Moral quality is not affected by quantity. The law is one. It is not

a succession of separate and independent precepts, but a unit. When any one point is broken, the whole is broken. He that is guilty of offence in the one point is guilty of all. The whole Decalogue is summed up in the one word LOVE. The same word sums up God and Duty. To break the least, sins against Love, God, and Duty. Not that sin has no degrees, nor that the man who offends only in one point is as bad as the man who offends in all, but to break at all is to break the whole. One leak will sink a ship, and one sin, whatever its form, separates the soul from God and sinks it in degradation and death.

As sin is the sum of all sins, so death is the sum of all its consequences. "The wages of sin *is* death." That something more than physical death is meant, is evident both from the narrative in Genesis, and in the Scriptural use of the word. When man sinned he died. Sin is always followed by death. Men are said to be dead while they live. Sin slays the man made in the Divine image. It separates him from God in whom is his life. Guilt, disorder, and desolation are the marks of the soul's death. Whatever the laws of heredity, they do not exonerate the sinner from his guilt. God holds the sinner responsible for his sin. Disorder follows alienation from the true Centre of his

Rom.
vi. 23.

life: disorder within himself, and disorder in the world. After disorder, desolation. Wickedness lays waste all things beautiful and good. It turns Paradise into a wilderness and Heaven into Hell. It is in the heart and in the world as a loathsome pestilence. Sin is the most terrible thing in God's universe. We have all sinned. There is none sinless among us. The only prayer that becomes our lips is: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

II. THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GRACE.

Over against this terrible word SIN, stands the greater word GRACE. This conjunction of the two defines the limits of our consideration of the word which comprehends the Evangelical faith. Grace goes over the trail of sin, tracks it to its innermost recesses, destroys its power, undoes its mischief, and turns its very weapons to its own destruction. Grace not only conquers, it more than conquers; it not only abounds, it abounds more exceedingly. We are saved by grace. What is grace? There is no definition of grace as there is of sin. It defies definition. It is illimitable, infinite, eternal. It is illustrated but never defined. In this connexion it is the overflowing mercy of God, without regard to merit on the one hand or obligation on the other. We had no claim. Our sin had forfeited every right we ever pos

sessed. God was under no obligation. We had defied His authority, rejected His word, and voluntarily forsaken Him for His sworn foe. But of His mercy He saved us. "God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Grace redeemed, delivered, and restored man from the curse and dominion of sin. The overtures did not come from man but from God. From first to last, salvation is of the grace of God.

Rom.
v. 8.

THE METHOD OF GRACE.

Grace is peculiarly associated with the mediatorial work of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is in the sacrifice of the Cross it finds its highest expression. Grace comes to us through Him. Sin finds its destruction in His death. The Cross is meaningless apart from sin. The Scriptures leave us in no doubt that to save man from sin, it was necessary that Christ should die. His death was vicarious and sacrificial. He was "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Sin laid the sinner under the wrath and condemnation of God. It separated from God and destroyed the basis of fellowship, which was identity of life. Before man could be restored, sin's penalty must be paid. A way must be found by which God could be just, and the justifier of the ungodly; a way by which man could be restored not only to the possibility of

S. John
i. 29.

fellowship, but to moral and spiritual fitness for it. That problem was solved in Jesus Christ the Eternal Son of the Father. It is the burden of the Gospel that He died for our sins. He gathered unto Himself and bore in His own Person the sin of the whole world. Every sinner may look to the Cross and say, He "loved ME, He gave Himself up for ME."

Gal. ii.
20.

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood,
Alleluia! What a Saviour!

HOW DOES THE GRACE OF GOD OPERATE TO THE ABOUNDING OVER SIN ?

First of all it secures the forgiveness of sin. The race is pardoned. The obedience of Christ was as truly representative as the sin of Adam. "So then as through one trespass the judgement came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life." As the Apostle argues in the Epistle to the Corinthians, "One died for all, therefore all died." The race died in Christ just as truly as the race sinned in Adam. When the First Representative sinned, all sinned. When the Last Representative died for sin, all died. This truth is expounded in the next chapter, and its full significance applied to experience. We died in Christ, therefore we are

Rom. v
18.

2 Cor.
v. 14.

dead to sin; dead to its claims, dead to its allurements, dead to its dominion. We are free from the law of sin and death, delivered from the curse and penalty of sin; offenders, yet justified freely by His grace. This is the first note of the Gospel. "Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins." "In whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

Acts xiii.
38.

Eph. i. 7

The ambassadors of the Gospel of grace are sent to proclaim the forgiveness of sin. In the forgiveness of the race every offender is pardoned. Not may be, but is! Without exception and without condition we are sent to tell every sinner that Jesus Christ has made Atonement for the world's sin, and through Him is preached the forgiveness of sin. That is the Gospel, and it is for sinners. How difficult it is to persuade men that the Good News is not reserved for worthy and respectable people! It is for prodigals, outcasts, wanderers; for every one that answers the description and title of sinner. The Lord came, not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. The Church is sent to the same sort of people, and its one and only message is that God for Christ's sake has forgiven them, and sends us to bring them

back to Him. Every barrier is removed, every obligation met, every sin cancelled, every sinner forgiven ; the Gospel is a message of a full, free, and universal pardon, on no other conditions than such as are involved in its acceptance through Christ.

That is not heresy but sound Gospel. Then what is the difference between a saved and an unsaved man ? Simply this, that one has accepted his pardon and the other has rejected it. Personal acceptance is the only condition of personal salvation. A man may make the Cross of Christ of none effect, and though racially saved, be personally lost. In the Queen's Jubilee year, 1887, I was in Edinburgh. Passing over George the Fourth Bridge one day I saw a picturesque procession of civic dignitaries going to the old Cross near St. Giles' Cathedral. There was a great crowd, and I turned and followed them. After a great fanfare of trumpets, a Royal Proclamation was read declaring the Queen's forgiveness of all deserters from the Army and Navy. I was not near enough to hear the terms of the proclamation, but I understood that all the deserters now pardoned should report themselves within so many days at the nearest military or naval depôt. I afterwards met two of them going to the Castle. What were they going for ? To be pardoned ? Nay,

they were pardoned already. It had been publicly proclaimed. They went simply to claim the certificate of their pardon; not to beg for it, but to claim it. Is that too strong a word to use of the sinner's forgiveness? Let St. John answer: "If we confess our sins, He ^{1 John}
^{i. 9.} is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Faithful and righteous! Not compassionate and pitiful! Jesus Christ has secured for us a right which a righteous God cannot ignore. Charles Wesley is very bold, but not bolder than the Apostle warrants, when he sings—

That sinner am I
Who on Jesus rely,
And come for the pardon God cannot deny.

The acceptance of pardon implies return to allegiance, and restoration to fellowship and service. The deserter received his certificate and walked into his place in the ranks. He could not accept, and walk out to lawlessness. Even so are repentance and faith assumed in the act of acceptance. Pardon is granted to every sinner, and awaits only the sinner's personal claim.

Then as pardon abounds over guilt, so sanctification abounds over the presence and effects of sin in the soul. Forgiveness without cleansing

would not cover man's need. The work of grace must be at least co-extensive with the work of sin. A sacrifice at the right hand of God secures our standing, but unless righteousness be implanted as well as imputed, we should still be in the bondage of sin. The Christ who laid down His life for our sins took it again, that He might impart it to us in the Person of His Spirit. Christ in the Heavens justifies; Christ in the heart saves. Where sin had its seat His throne is established. The will is surrendered, the heart cleansed, the desire changed, and the nature renewed. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation." "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Cleansing and Regeneration restore man's nature to its true order, and death is swallowed up in life.

The restored order in the man secures the restoration of the true order in the world. The new man necessitates a New Heaven and a New Earth. Personal regeneration is followed by social reconstruction.

Sin brought guilt, grace brings justification; sin separated man from God, grace brings him nigh by the blood of Christ; sin darkened the understanding and defiled the heart, grace brings light and knowledge and purifies the heart; sin disturbed the true order of man's

nature and defaced the Divine image within him, grace creates him anew after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness ; sin cursed the world, grace restores its peace and beauty ; sin brought death, grace brings the gift of life. Wherever sin abounded, grace hath abounded more exceedingly.

There are still the two Adams, and the responsibility of choice still lies with man. We may reject grace and continue in sin, or we may renounce sin and live in grace. Every man elects to be identified with Adam or Christ, to choose sin or grace. No man need continue in sin, for grace has abounded unto complete salvation.

BORN OF THE FLESH AND BORN
OF THE SPIRIT

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew.”—*S. John* iii. 6, 7.

BORN OF THE FLESH AND BORN OF THE SPIRIT

God is every man's Father, but it does not follow that every man who is God's offspring is therefore a son of God. The Fatherhood is often interpreted as if it involved the sonship, but it does not. Even among men, the mere fact of physical parentage is but a small element in the relation expressed by the words father and son. The real meaning signifies a bond of affection and reverence, which is not of physical origin. It is possible to be lineally akin and spiritually alien. Parentage may transmit nothing beyond the essential elements of life, every mental and moral quality being in direct antagonism to those of the parent. There are parents that are not parents, and sons that are not sons. Every feature of the relationship is missing except the physical incident of birth.

The Christ who reveals the Universal Fatherhood of God denies the universal sonship of men.

"As many as received Him to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them

S. John
i. 12.

that believe on His Name.” It was a right bestowed, not a right recognised. Sonship, therefore, is conditioned upon receiving Christ. We are sons of God in virtue of our reception of Him : sons by the adoption of grace not of law. In the Sermon on the Mount men are exhorted to cultivate certain moral qualities to this end, “that ye may be sons of your Father which is in Heaven.” God is their Father, yet they need to become His sons. Thus again, sonship is conditioned upon moral and spiritual correspondence. To the Jews, Jesus bluntly denied the claim of sonship. They said, “We have one Father, even God.” He replied in the startling words, “Ye are of your father the Devil.” It is evident, therefore, that although everything involved in Fatherhood is completely realised in God, the conditions of sonship are not universally realised in man. Just as in human kinship natural relations may be repudiated and natural instincts extinguished, so in our Divine relationship, sonship may become a dead letter by sinful repudiation and spiritual alienation.

Consistently with this teaching, the New Testament sharply divides all men into two classes, the children of God and the children of the Devil. These are variously described, but the classification never varies. There is no intermediate class. The twofold classification is all-inclusive. Every

S. Matt.
v. 45.

S. John
viii. 41, 44.

man is sheep or goat, converted or unconverted, saved or lost, a child of light or a child of darkness, quickened into life or dead in sin, a son of God or a child of the Devil. Division so sharp and uncompromising jars upon the susceptibilities of the easy toleration of our times. It lacks accommodation, flexibility, and discrimination. Besides, it creates embarrassments. Men of moral definiteness may be sharply divided, but there are many who can scarcely be ranked with either the distinctly good or the definitely bad. Are not men after all a mixture of good and bad? Many of the irreligious are personally attractive, while some religious people are decidedly repulsive. Unspiritual men are often scrupulously moral, while others zealous in religion are unscrupulously lax in morality. Yet the Lord never wavers in His judgement. He judges by the heart, and at heart every man is of the flesh or of the Spirit.

I. THIS DISTINCTION CHRIST ATTRIBUTES TO THE OPERATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL AND UNIVERSAL LAW : “ *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.* ”

All living things come into being by birth. Life cannot be manufactured. The processes of fusion and adaptation can accomplish much, but they cannot produce life. Everything short of life can be attained. The elements of life can be analysed and copied, the forms of life can be imi-

tated so perfectly that the most microscopic examination reveals no difference, but there is no life. The protoplasmic germ can be made up so perfectly that it is impossible to distinguish the natural from the artificial, but out of the one comes life, whilst in the other there is no life. The mysterious element eludes and baffles all human skill. There is no life but by communication from a living parent. Nothing lives that does not come by the gateway of birth.

Parentage determines nature. The propagation of every form of life is limited to its own kind. Life carries its seed within itself ; the seed it yields is after its own kind ; to each seed is given a body of its own. In the sphere of Nature every seed brings forth after its own kind and no other. This law is never transgressed. The creatures of the sea bring forth after their kind, and every winged fowl after its kind. That which is born of the animal is animal ; that which is born of vegetable is vegetable ; that which is born of man is man.

Upon this universal law Jesus bases the universal necessity of the New Birth. The spiritual kingdom demands a quality of being not possessed by the natural man. Here again we touch a fundamental principle. Every kingdom demands as a condition of citizenship correspondence with its own quality of life. The realms of music and art

are impossible to all who are destitute of musical and artistic gifts. Mathematics are forbidden ground to men who have no capacity for figures and no power of calculation. The man born blind is not more destitute of the sense of light and colour than is the man utterly without conception of the things for which he has no mental faculty. If any man would enter the kingdom of harmony he must be musical; if he would enter the kingdom of art he must have the soul of an artist; if he would enter the kingdom of pure reason he must have the gift of sequence, order, and relation. No kingdom is accessible without affinity for its own peculiar nature and order of life and service. Therefore the first demand of a spiritual kingdom is a spiritual nature. Since "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," Jesus says, "Marvel not, that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew." The new birth is the inevitable necessity of universal law.

II. THE NATURAL MAN IS DISQUALIFIED FOR A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM.

Man is born of the flesh and needs to be born again of the Spirit. The term flesh is variously used in the New Testament :

1. Of all living creatures. 1 Cor. xv. 39.
2. The substance of the living body. Col. ii. 1 ; 2 Cor. iv. 11 ; Gal. iv. 13

3. The life lived in the body. Gal. ii. 20 ; Heb. v. 7.

4. Natural generation. Rom. ix. 3, 5.

5. The animal nature of man without suggestion of depravity. S. John i. 13.

6. The whole of man's human nature. Rom. viii. 3 ; 1 John iv. 2 ; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

7. Ethically of life lived in the power and dominion of the flesh.

In its ethical sense it—

(a) Is the avenue of evil. S. Matt. xxvi. 41.

(b) Incites to sin. Rom. vii. 18 ; xiii. 14 ; Gal. v. 16-21 ; Jude 23.

(c) Makes captive to sin. Rom. vii. 14-23 ; viii. 6-8.

(d) Brings forth death. Rom. vii. 5 ; Gal. vi. 8.

When flesh is used as opposed to spirit, it denotes the earthly nature of man apart from Divine influence, and corresponds to S. Paul's expression, the natural man. It signifies the entire man, sense and reason, without the Holy Spirit. This flesh-born humanity cannot enter the kingdom of God. Its disqualifications are INTELLECTUAL, EMOTIONAL, and VOLITIONAL.

Christ's condemnation of the flesh is threefold :

1. It cannot see the kingdom of God.

2. It cannot enter the kingdom of God.

3. It chooses evil and darkness rather than goodness and light.

This is confirmed in the teaching of S. Paul. "The natural man," he says, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him ; and he cannot know them because they are spiritually judged." That is the intellectual disqualification ; they cannot see the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Again, "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh—for the mind of the flesh is death—because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be : and they that are in the flesh cannot please God." That is the emotional disqualification ; they have neither desire nor appreciation of the things of the Spirit. They cannot enter the kingdom of God. Rom. viii. 5-8.

Then again, writing to the Ephesians of their unregenerate life, he says : "Wherein aforetime ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience ; among whom we also once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest." That is the volitional disqualification. The will enslaved to the lusts of the flesh, captive to the Prince of the power of the air, the unregenerate choose to live according to the course of this world. Children of the Eph. ii. 3.

flesh are the children of wrath. The passage does not refer to the wrath of God, although that also may be implied. It does not mean that every child comes into the world the subject of Divine displeasure. God is not mentioned in the whole passage. The phrase must be interpreted as similar expressions are interpreted. Children of light, children of darkness, and children of disobedience, are descriptive of the manner and quality of life. So the "children of wrath" sums up in a phrase the characteristics of the life of men dead in trespasses and sins. They are the children of impulse, lust, and passion, following the desires of the flesh and of the mind. All the features of the life of the flesh are gathered up in another Ephesians passage. Writing of the Gentiles who walk in the vanity of their mind, he says, "Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart ; who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." Their minds darkened, their souls alienated from God the only source of true life, their hearts hardened; they choose to live according to the passions and lusts of the flesh.

These then are the marks of the flesh. It cannot see the things of the Spirit ; it has no love for God

or the things of His kingdom ; it does not desire either Him or His ; it chooses to live for the things of the flesh according to the course of this world ; it is enslaved and captive to the god of this world. The derangement of man's nature by sin has darkened his understanding, depraved his affections, and enslaved his will. In face of these things who can wonder that the first demand of the kingdom of God is that man must be born again ? The mind must be enlightened, the heart renewed, and the will emancipated before we can enter the kingdom of Heaven.

THE NEED OF THIS NEW BIRTH IS UNIVERSAL. If any man might have claimed exemption it was Nicodemus. He was a man of great intellectual refinement, deep religious sensibility, and unimpeachable character, yet it was to him Jesus said, "Marvel not, that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew." Culture can never supersede conversion, nor can education dispense with the need of regeneration. To the "scientific mind" this also is foolishness. It resents limitation, and ridicules the idea that it cannot discover things revealed unto babes. But faculties missing at birth cannot be afterwards supplied. Imperfect organs may be remedied or developed, but the sense itself must be born. In the birth "of the flesh" the spiritual is potentially present, but comes to birth only by the operation of the Spirit. A sense

missing at birth cannot be supplied by extra cultivation of others. Touch may become wonderfully sensitive, but it cannot give sight. Hearing may be developed to the utmost acuteness, but it cannot give the sense of taste or smell. Neither is it possible to develop a spiritual faculty out of natural endowments. Nature may be educated to the utmost limits of its own powers, but it cannot be educated into something of a totally different nature. There is no process by which a man can be developed out of a horse, or a beast out of a bird. So between the natural and the spiritual there is a great gulf fixed. Even Timothy who from a child had known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make men wise unto salvation, is Paul's son in the Gospel, having been begotten of him in the Spirit. It is a hard saying for men of great natural attainments, refined sensibilities, and a native consciousness of self-sufficiency, that Regeneration is as necessary for them as for the ignorant and degraded, but it is the simple truth. All are born of the flesh and need to be born again of the Spirit. The necessity is fundamental, therefore universal.

III. WHAT IS IT TO BE BORN OF THE SPIRIT ?

God has thrown an impenetrable veil over the beginnings and processes of life. That we live we know, but how we live no man can tell. Life is evident to the consciousness, manifest to the

BORN OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT 51

senses, but mysterious in its process. So it is with the life that is born of the Spirit. “The wind bloweth where it listeth,” there is the fact; “and thou hearest the voice thereof,” there is the evidence of the fact; “but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth,” there is the mysterious process of the fact. We know that we have entered into a new life, but how the Spirit of God operates upon the soul, enlightening the mind, renewing the heart, subduing the will, creating a new nature, belongs to the hidden things of God. The fact we know, the results are manifest, the method is a solemn mystery.

There are, however, some instructive negative, and one or two positive truths revealed concerning even the process. The children of God are born we are told, “Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” The negatives are, that no man can become a child of God by natural descent, “it is not of bloods”; or by any refinement, cultivation, development, of the natural man, it is not “of the will of the flesh”; or by any aspiration, resolution, or effort of the soul, it is not “of the will of man.” Ancestry, education, determination, avail not to make a man a child of God. The positive truths are, that it is a birth; by the direct operation of the Spirit of God, through the agency of truth. It is a birth, not a development.

S. John
iii. 8.

S. John
i. 12, 13.

It is the beginning of a new life, not the introduction of the old life into new conditions. It is an act of creation by which the man is born again, a new creature in Christ Jesus. The life is begotten in the soul by the Holy Spirit and the vehicle of communication is the Word of God. "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The water refers not to Baptism but to the truth of which Baptism is the sign. The cleansing is "by the washing of water with the Word." Regeneration is both a washing and a renewal. The soul is purified by obedience to the truth, "having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God."

S. John
iii. 5.

Eph. v.
26.

Titus
iii. 5.

1 Pet. i.
22, 23.

The nature of the change wrought in man is indicated by its contrast with the flesh. A birth is an emancipation and an enlargement of capacity and opportunity. By spiritual birth man escapes from his imprisonment within the limitations of the fleshly life, and enters a new kingdom with new interests and activities. The intellectual, emotional, and volitional disqualifications disappear. Born of God he begins to know God and to receive the things of the Spirit. His hatred and dread of God give place to love and fellowship. His affections, desires, and feelings are changed from the things of the flesh to the things of God. His will is emancipated. He

finds his freedom in surrender to the will of God, and his delight in obedience to that will. His derangement having ceased, his delusions disappear, and order being restored, his whole life moves with the spontaneity of a second nature in the spiritual kingdom. Born of the Spirit he lives in the Spirit, walks not after the flesh but after the Spirit, prays in the Spirit, lives, moves, and has his being in the realm of the Spirit. The new life fills up the lack of the natural man, endues every faculty with its utmost possibility, secures order and harmony throughout the whole being, and restores life to its true relation with God and the universe. By it man becomes a child of God and a citizen of Heaven, which is as far above the life of the flesh, as the life of man is above that of the brute.

THE MARKS OF SONSHIP ARE CORRESPONDENCE AND CO-OPERATION.

“If ye were Abraham’s children ye would do the works of Abraham . . . ye do the works of your father . . . ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do.” Jesus appealed constantly to His works as the proof of His Sonship. “The works that I do in My Father’s name, these bear witness of Me.” “If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not Me, believe the works : that ye may

S. John viii.
39, 41, 44.

S. John x.
25, 37, 38.

S. John
xiv. 10.

know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." To Philip He said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from Myself: but the Father abiding in Me doeth His works."

They that are of the flesh do the works of the flesh. They that are of the Spirit bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. Oneness of nature manifests itself in fellowship of sympathy, correspondence of character, and co-operation in service. The sons of God are God-like, and the children of the Devil bear the marks of their father. Every man's pedigree is declared in his conduct. "In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the Devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." The child of God purifies himself as He is pure, is holy for He is holy, and dwells in love for God is love. He is born of God, dwells in God, belongs to God, works with God, and is like God. He has become the son of the Father which is in Heaven.

I John
iii. 10.

The experiences which accompany regeneration are no essential part of the process, and vary with conditions of temperament and education but the fundamental necessity and the supreme privilege of every man are, that he should be born anew of the Spirit, and by faith in Christ become a child of God.

MAN : NATURAL, CARNAL,
SPIRITUAL

“ Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him : and he cannot know them because they are spiritually judged.”—I *Cor.* ii. 14.

“ And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat ; for ye were not able to bear it ; nay, not even now are ye able ; for ye are yet carnal : for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk after the manner of men ? ”—I *Cor.* iii. 1-3.

“ And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly : and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.”—I *Thess.* v. 23, 24.

MAN : NATURAL, CARNAL, SPIRITUAL

THE Bible has its own account of man. It does not profess to be exhaustive, scientific, or complete. It is an account consistent with its own special purpose. Scriptural history is recorded as the vehicle of Revelation. Whatever is extraneous to that specific object is omitted without regard to its value to other departments of knowledge. The purpose settles the principle of selection. That purpose from first to last is religious and not scientific. The story of man's creation is told not to furnish a complete account of the processes by which the worlds were made, but to make plain man's relation to God. It asserts the fact of the Divine origin of all created things ; reveals God as a personality distinct from creation, existing before all worlds, and Himself their Creator ; and manifests the unity of God through all the manifold operations. The account is written for the correction of all possible errors concerning God's relation to the universe. The fact of Divine origin is the answer to the Atheistic interpretation of the world. The

distinct personality denies the theory of the Pantheist, who regards Deity as inseparable from the universe, all things being the sum total of Divinity. The unity of the Creator corrects the Polytheism of idolatry which attributes the creation of the various elements to different deities. It was to reveal the Unity, Personality, and Creative Energy of God, that the Bible account was written. It is not a scientific treatise ; that lies outside its purpose. Neither is it a complete history ; it is a selection of events with a view to a specific object.

But though the Bible is non-scientific it is never un-scientific. Revealed truth can never be out of harmony with anything that is true, and it anticipates all ultimate developments of truth. Every new discovery in the principles and method of the operations of nature sheds new light upon the revelation of the Word, and corrects false conceptions and erroneous interpretations, but there can be no ultimate antagonism between truth scientifically established and truth that has come by revelation. Truth is one, and at the last, truth discovered will confirm truth revealed.

The philosophy of the Bible is just as specific as its account of creation. It does not profess to give us a complete explanation of man's nature, much less the complete story of his

development and history. In a strikingly picturesque and simple way it sets forth his primitive state as neither highly civilised nor barbarously savage. He was placed in a garden in a state of innocence and simplicity, with his final destiny unrealised and unknown. The fact of his probation is indicated by the simple laws by which he was to live. Under the seductive pressure of temptation he snatched prematurely at his destiny and fell under sin. He was not, however, utterly lost even as to his destiny. Grace broke his fall. The promise of redemption and restoration proves him redeemable. No essential part of his nature was utterly lost. God undertook his salvation. The story of the Scriptures is the story of man's Redemption, Regeneration, Sanctification, and Glorification. It covers the whole distance from his fall through sin to his ultimate restoration through grace.

As the Biblical account of man is specific, so is its terminology peculiar. Non-Biblical philosophies divide man into mind and matter; the Bible divides him into flesh, soul, and spirit. It also classifies man according to this threefold division as NATURAL, CARNAL, and SPIRITUAL. These terms are the subject of much controversy into which we cannot now enter. Our purpose is to understand their Biblical meaning as it bears upon Christian life and experience.

FLESH, SOUL, SPIRIT.

The non-ethical use of the word flesh does not here concern us. When S. Paul speaks of his flesh as an active principle opposed to righteousness, he does not refer to the flesh and blood of his natural body. The bodily organism has no moral quality in itself. When ethical and moral qualities are attributed to it, the term is always figurative and special. In Pauline terminology "flesh" is used to denote the principle, or the seat of the principle, which in fallen human nature resists the law; which is in antagonism with man's higher nature which consents to the law; and which, in the regenerate, wars against the Spirit. The same principle is variously described as "the old man," "the body of sin," "the body of the flesh," and "the body of death." The explanation of this evil association of the word is not that the flesh is the only occasion of sin, for we read of "sinful desires of the mind" and "the defilement of the spirit," as well as of the lust of the flesh. But it is so largely through the appetites and passions of the flesh that men are tempted, that the Apostle makes the medium the figurative representative of the principle itself. It therefore stands for the principle of sin in man.

What is the distinction between soul and spirit? Are they separate or identical? Are

Eph. ii.
3; *iv.* 17.
2 Cor.
vii. 1.

they separate qualities or simply two aspects of the non-material in man? There are only three passages where the words occur together, and in two of them the third term occurs also. The reference in 1 Corinthians xv. 45 is to the Resurrection, and indicates the difference between Adam and Christ, one being made unto the race a living soul, and the other a quickening Spirit. The second occasion is in 1 Thessalonians v. 23, where the Apostle prays for their complete sanctification and entire preservation in spirit, soul, and body, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The third is Hebrews iv. 12: "For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." This does not mean that the various parts mentioned are distinct and separable quantities, dividing soul *from* spirit and joints *from* marrow, but that the interpenetrating power of the Word lays bare the true nature of every part of man.

The terms, like the term flesh, have to be considered religiously rather than psychologically, and there is no warrant to justify the recognition of three distinct elements in human nature. As flesh is used for the seat of the principle of sin, so

soul is the region of feeling, affection, impulse ; and the spirit is the realm of spiritual consciousness and the shrine of the Divine indwelling. The terms are adopted for practical purposes, body and soul, flesh and spirit, being interchangeable expressions for the nature of man. In soul and spirit the one immaterial principle is distinguished as it is related on the one hand to the world of sense through the body, and on the other to the world of spiritual realities. The soul comes between the higher and the lower elements of our being, and is common to both body and spirit. It is the sphere of our desires and passions, the moral quality of which is determined by their direction. Allied with the flesh they become worldly and sinful, controlled by the spirit they become innocent and holy. The spirit in man is the element which is turned to God and capable of God. Dead or dormant in the unregenerate, it is quickened into life by the Holy Spirit, and when entirely possessed by Him who quickens, man dwells in God and God in him. He knows God, communes with God, discerns God in all things and sees all things in Him.

A THREEFOLD CLASSIFICATION.

This threefold distinction in the elements of man's being leads to a threefold classification of man's moral and spiritual character. Men are described as Natural, Carnal, and Spiritual. The

Natural man or "animal," as it is always rendered in the margin of the Revised Version, is the man in whom the soul has not been quickened into fellowship with spiritual realities. He is the man Christ speaks of as "born of the flesh," and whose soul lies in the sphere of sense. He has no discernment of spiritual things and is without the knowledge of God, and as the life of the soul is in the knowledge of God, he is dead to the spiritual realities for which he was created. He is soulish, animal, sense-bound. The spiritual man is born of the Spirit, discerns the spiritual realities, offers spiritual sacrifices, and enjoys spiritual fellowship. He is quickened into a new life, is born into a new Kingdom, judges all things by a new standard, and lives in the flesh a new life of the Spirit.

I Cor.
ii. 14.

Eph. i.
3.

I Pet.
ii. 5.

I John
i. 7.

The Natural and the Spiritual thus correspond to those born of the flesh and those born of the Spirit, upon which is based the decisive classification of the New Testament of all men into two classes. But what of this simple division when a third class is added? We read of some who were sanctified and yet not spiritual, in Christ yet carnal, called saints and yet fleshly. The kingdoms of the flesh and spirit are diametrically opposed, and yet the fleshly has overlapped into the spiritual. The old man lives in the new life. Regenerate men live carnal lives,

What can this mean? The Apostle does not say they are flesh, but that they are fleshly. There is a great difference between the earth and things that are earthy, between ground that is stone and soil that is stony. One is the very nature of the thing; it is rock—solid, unrelieved stone. The other is the incidental characteristic of another substance; the ground is soil but the soil is stony. So he says of these regenerate people, that, though they are within the realm of the Spirit, they are fleshly rather than spiritual. Just as some men are in the world but not far from the Kingdom, so these people are in the Kingdom but not far from the world. The Corinthian Christians were born again, but were only “babes in Christ,” and the trend of their lives was still after the old order rather than the new.

That saints should be carnal seems utterly illogical, but it is true to experience and consistent with the laws of all life that the new-born should be babes. The new birth starts impulses and emotions within the soul that seem to be irresistible in their power. The whole current of life is reversed, the old nature is changed, a Divine influence pervades and impels the soul. Old things have passed away and all things become new. The old allurements are loathed, old desires changed, and old ties broken. The

whole nature is vitalised with a new energy that sweeps the soul God-ward with a mighty sense of unconquerable life. All things are possible in the thrilling enthusiasm of a new-born soul. The possibility of inward conflict or slackness seems to be lost in the rapture of a new sense of the Infinite. The spiritual life will surely be as natural to the new nature as the fleshly life was to the old. It will be instinctive, automatic, irresistible. After a time the new man is confronted by a resurrection of the old. He has a will that rebels, an old lust that revives, old habits that clutch his soul. Regeneration is only a birth, and a birth is but a beginning. Things of the flesh do not retire without a contest ; the new life has to fight for its existence and to conquer before it can be supreme. Sin in believers may be a perplexity to both believers and unbelievers, it may be condemned as illogical and inconsistent, but there can be no doubt of its existence. The seventh chapter of Romans seems impossible after the sixth, but it is the only way to the eighth. The new life, though Divine, needs defence, cultivation, and discipline. Babes in Christ are beset with carnalities.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BABES ? They live by impulse rather than by principle, are impressed by externals, contend for non-essentials, and are of feeble digestion. A babe

does not reason, has no idea of values, is without sense of proportion, and must be fed with milk. The life is soulish. The same characteristics appear in babes of the spiritual realm. They are dominated by the senses and influenced by carnalities. It is fleshly to walk according to the impulse and desires of the mind. Spiritual babes live on emotion rather than walk by principle, and judge by feeling rather than by faith. What the soul likes counts for more than what God wills. When the feelings are lifted up, the soul rejoices. What the heart desires, that it seeks. "I don't like it," or "I do" becomes the unreasoning and unreasoned ground for every judgment and the guide for every choice. Born of the Spirit, they still walk after the flesh.

It is the same childish element in men that is more impressed by externals than by inward realities. These "Babes" elected their rival favourites among the Apostles according to the judgement of the flesh. The preference for Paul, Apollos, or Cephas was purely personal and selfish. The choice was made on grounds of personal gratification. The preacher was preferred because he flattered and gratified the intellectual, emotional, or social qualities. Sugar-plums count for much in the preferences of babes. In worship they are influenced by the sensuous and spectacular rather than by the inward and spiritual. Ritual

always appeals to the nursery. The millinery, drapery, processions, and awesomeness of ritual impress those who have no deeper vision. It is meet and appropriate for those who have not yet learned that God is Spirit, and that all acceptable worship is spiritual. The less perception there is of the spiritual, the greater is the demand for the perfection of the carnal. When a service becomes a performance, it ceases to be worship.

The same dependence upon the external is seen in their conduct. They need to have everything carefully labelled. Spiritual men have an anointing of the Holy One and know all things. They are led of the Spirit, and have no need of minute instructions from others. But labels are necessary for nurseries. The rule must be by precept, an unequivocal "Thou shalt," and an authoritative "Thou shalt not." They must be told specifically what is right and what is wrong. The things of the conscience are too deep and perplexing for their tender minds; an over-lord must be found to undertake for them. A spiritual instructor is needed to supply the lack of spiritual perception. Tutors and governors are inseparable from our nonage.

¹ *John ii. 20.*

Another mark of childishness is the readiness to quarrel over trifles. Nothing is too trivial to become the occasion of wrangling among children, and one is filled with astonishment at the magni-

tude of the strife over trifles among grown-up people. Sensitiveness is often only petulance and selfishness writ large. Home and Church are often disturbed by the petty jealousies and wranglings of people who ought to know better. The Church at Corinth is not the last of the Churches to be cursed with the carnalities of its people; the writer to the Hebrews makes the same complaint. Men who by their years ought to have been teachers were still at the rudiments of religion, without experience, without sense, and without discrimination, babes who had to be fed on milk. The explanation of their ungrown condition is that they are carnal, and not spiritual. They are babes whose mental and spiritual faculties are undeveloped, overgrown in years and undergrown in character. The Churches are overstocked with overgrown babes, and cursed with the carnalities of Spirit-born people.

FROM CARNAL TO SPIRITUAL.

The writer to the Hebrews exhorts the babes “to cease to speak of the first principles of Christ, and press on unto perfection.” Let childish things be put away. The childishness can be cured only by the carnalities being uprooted, and they can be uprooted only by the completion of Regeneration in the Entire Sanctification of the man. This is the Divine purpose in man’s salvation: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification

Heb. v.
11, 12.

Heb. vi.
1.

1 Thess
iv. 3-5.

that ye abstain from fornication ; that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the passion of lust." "God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit." Entire sanctification is the complete sanctification of the entire man. The Apostle's prayer for the Thessalonians is the most comprehensive statement of this doctrine. It asks for an absolute and unrestricted sanctification "negative and positive, perfect in whole, and perfect in parts, at once consummate and progressive, confirmed for time and for eternity."

² *Thess.*
ii. 13.

There is a sense in which sanctification is entire in regeneration. It is a mistake to imagine there can be laxity and defect in the work of conversion. To the measure of every man's light the surrender to God must be without reserve, and the cleansing of the heart from an evil conscience is as entire as justification is complete. "By one offering, He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." At conversion we become the Lord's and are laid upon the altar of sanctification. That sacrifice must always be entire. No part can be withheld if the offering is to be acceptable, and whatever is laid upon the altar is sanctified. No Christian can live in sin, or knowingly withhold anything from the Lord.

Heb. x.
14.

Though sanctification is in this sense complete

at conversion, in the purpose of God and the experience of the believer, much is left to be accomplished in the nature of the sanctified. The carnalities need to be purged out. Entire Sanctification completes the work of Regeneration, pervading every part of the renewed nature. The spirit is sanctified wholly; the reason is filled with the all-pervasive presence of God realised in the consciousness. Every faculty of the mind is not only cleansed from defilement, but in every part there is reflected the mind of God. The soul is sanctified wholly; its desires are holy, its passions clean, its thoughts pure, its impulses God-ward, and its delight is in the will of the Lord. The tugging of the old nature with its evil lusts is over. The body is sanctified wholly; its members become instruments of righteousness; it is a temple of God, cleansed, sanctified, and filled with the glory of His presence. The sanctification of the parts is not a separate process. The work is one, and is accomplished in the sanctification of the man. The parts are mentioned to set forth the completeness and entirety of the work of God in redeemed and sanctified man. It is entire, complete, without restriction, and without defect. Every part is cleansed, perfected, and pervaded with the energy of the Divine Presence. The fleshly is eradicated and the spiritual prevails.

In this state of entire sanctification the entire man is preserved without blame. The God that sanctifies, keeps. He that is able to do, is able to maintain what He has done. The words of the Apostle are chosen with the utmost care. He does not pray that they may be kept without fault, but without blame. Many blameless things are faulty, and many faulty things are blameless. A work done from purest love and to the utmost capacity may be full of faults but entirely free from blame. A picture is often hung in the home that has a value apart altogether from the judgement of the Academy. Faultless? Not by a long way. But a pure soul put its best into it, and soul is more than precision. Faultless? Nay, for though the sanctification be entire, it is not final. The glorification is not yet. Until it comes the spirit will be beset with limitations and infirmities, the soul will be hampered in its aspirations, and the body will continue to be an imperfect instrument preventing with its weakness the will of the spirit. Not faultless, but blameless. Without reproach, without condemnation, and in all things acceptable before God!

That is the promise and possibility of grace. The worship of man's spirit, the desire of man's heart, the functions of man's body a blameless, perpetual sacrifice unto the Lord Most High. Blameless, not merely according to the low ideals

of mortality, but in the searching light of the eternal at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thought can climb no higher. It is exceeding abundantly, above all we could ask or think. No wonder the Apostle pledges the Almighty to the task. God has called us unto this perfection, and He also will do it. He is faithful, and cannot fail. The prayer is a promise, and God is pledged. When, when shall it once be? Even here and now the promise is ours, and the sanctifying power waits upon our faith.

THE INCARNATION AND ITS
GLORIOUS PURPOSE

“The Man Christ Jesus.”—1 *Tim.* ii. 5.

“A man in Christ.”—2 *Cor.* xii. 2.

THE INCARNATION AND ITS GLORIOUS PURPOSE

THE purpose of the Incarnation is summed up in the one word Identification. In the Man Christ Jesus, God identified Himself with the human race and tabernacled among men; the man in Christ is identified with God and dwells in Him. God manifest in the flesh is the supreme mystery, and man made like God is the supreme glory of the Gospel of grace. The process of Divine Incarnation in human flesh transcends all human reason, but the fact is declared, and its glorious purpose is clearly revealed.

I. THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.

The New Testament leaves no room for doubt as to the proper humanity of Jesus Christ. S. John in the introduction to his Gospel, says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and

*S. John i.
1, 14.*

truth." The Word that was in the beginning became flesh, the Word that was with God dwelt among men, the Word that was God was made manifest, full of grace and truth.

The completest statement of the Incarnation is S. Paul's great word on the Renunciation :
Phil. ii. 5-8. R.V. margin. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus ; who being in the form of God counted it not a thing to be grasped, to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross."

This passage sets forth seven facts concerning Jesus Christ.

1. That He was originally in the form of God.
2. That He esteemed not equality with God a thing to be grasped.
3. That He voluntarily gave up the privileges and prerogatives of Divinity.
4. That He exchanged the form of God for the form of a servant.
5. That He became man.
6. That He humbled Himself unto obedience.
7. That He consented to the death of the Cross.

The significant point of the passage is that the rights and powers of divinity were exchanged for

the limitations of humanity. The form of God was laid aside that He might take the form of a servant. The word translated "form" does not mean mere shape or resemblance. There is a difference between form and fashion; one is the essential and the other the apparent. The exchanged form means an exchanged mode of existence. The same Personality that had dwelt from the beginning with God, and was God, became a servant and lived within man's conditions. He had the fashion of a man, and was indistinguishable in all externals from the rest of the race. The conditions of the Heavenly state did not overlap into the earthly. Self-emptying preceded self-humbling. He was Man among men. There was nothing that destroyed any human quality, neither anything that neutralised any human limitation. His manhood was real.

The identification of Christ with men was as complete in extent as it was real in nature. The first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews sets forth seven proofs of the Divine Sonship, and the second chapter enumerates the following seven points of His identification with man: He descended to man's level, took man's nature, endured man's temptation, died in man's place, conquered man's foe, achieved man's victory, and secured man's salvation. Verse 17 sums up the whole doctrine of His humanity in the

words, "Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren." The words must be taken as they stand without limit and without modification. "In all things" means that in all respects He partook of man's nature, and shared man's lot. He hungered, toiled, wearied, suffered, and was in all things subject to the limitations and conditions of human life. Without exemption and without exception He was made in all things like unto His brethren.

Heb. iv.
15.

1 John
11. 5.

He differed from the rest of the race in that in Him there was no sin. But that in no way affects the reality of His humanity. Sin is no essential part of manhood. The more sinful a man is the less of a man he becomes, and the less sinful he is the more truly is he a man. The sinlessness of Jesus establishes His claim to the perfection of manhood. Sinlessness does not imply ignorance concerning sin. No man in God's universe knows so much about sin as the Man Christ Jesus. He who knew no sin was made to be sin for sinful man. He knows more of its sinfulness, its anguish, and its woe than any other. He bore its burden, paid its penalty, and endured its curse. By His sinlessness He was separate from sinners, but His separateness from sin makes His identification with man the more complete. He is not only man, but The Man: the Brother, Head, and Representative of all.

2 Cor. v.
21.

SINLESSNESS DID NOT EXEMPT HIM FROM TEMPTATION.

Made in all things like unto His brethren, He was "in all points tempted like as we are." The "in all things" of Hebrews ii. 17 is followed by the "in all points" of Hebrews iv. 15. It must be so. If He laid aside all that was peculiar to His Divinity, and took upon Himself all that is common to our humanity, there could be no escape from the temptations that assail all mankind. So He was "in all points tempted like as we are." Not in all forms. Temptation comes to us in many ways that were impossible to Him. He did not live in the twentieth century, nor in the atmosphere of Western civilisation. There were social, domestic, and industrial relationships into which He never entered. The forms of temptation vary with varying conditions, but the essentials of temptation are the same in every place and in every age. Jesus was tempted in all points at which man is assailable. He was tempted along every possible avenue. He was assailed with every weapon in the Devil's armoury. That the temptation was real is evident from the words, "He suffered being tempted." It was no sham fight, no mere parade. He felt the stress and struggle of resistance. Because He was truly man, He was exposed to the assaults and seductions that are the common lot of man.

Heb. iv.
15

Heb. ii.
18.

Another thing that needs to be emphasised in this connexion is that the Man Christ Jesus lived His life and fulfilled His Mission, with no other resources than those He has made possible to every man in Him. There lurks in our thoughts the impression that after all Jesus had advantages and resources that are open to no other. The Christ of miraculous birth and miraculous power seems to command possibilities altogether exceptional, that place Him beyond the range of identification. One of the catch-questions of my Sunday-school days was as to the difference between the miracles of Christ and those of His disciples. The answer, when we got one, invariably was that the disciples wrought miracles in the power of Christ, but Christ wrought them by His own inherent power. But that is just what Christ did not do. He wrought in the power of the Holy Ghost. When He emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant, the Father filled Him with His Spirit. "God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power : Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." What the Father gave to the Son, the Son has given to man. The self-same Spirit that was in the Man Christ Jesus, is given to every man in Christ. Within the limits of our need, the Spirit comes to be to us, all

that He was to Jesus. The Christ had no resources that He has not made accessible to all.

This is the Man Christ Jesus. Of like nature with ourselves, subject to the limitations, perils, temptations of our lot, and restricted to such resources as are now available to all men through Him. Truly man, yet not less God. It is the same Person in the form of a servant that from the beginning was in the form of God, in all points truly human, in all essentials truly Divine. A proper Man yet truly God! Perfect Manhood and Perfect Deity! History furnishes us with an instance of a prince who voluntarily became a workman in a foreign land. He was treated as the rest of the workers, subject to the same regulations, without exceptional privileges or extra supplies. The changed mode of existence did not affect his princely rank. He exchanged the form of a ruler for the form of a workman, but he was as truly of royal blood in his overalls as in his robes, as truly an heir-apparent in the workshop as at the court. So with Christ. The changed mode of existence did not affect His personality. He had exchanged the position and prerogatives of God for the conditions and limitations of man, but He was still God. He claimed to be one with God: "I and the Father are One." He was as truly God in the workshop at Nazareth as on the Throne. But He is man.

S. John
x. 30.

The renunciation was so complete that He was among men in all things like unto His brethren, in all points tempted as they, yet without sin. He is God's ideal man. He stands before God and man as the pattern of what God meant man to be, and the sample of what redeemed man is destined to become. Sinless, flawless, perfect, and approved, the Son of God is the pledge and standard of our salvation.

II. MAN IN CHRIST.

The Incarnation reveals the Divine intention. When Divinity identified itself with Humanity, it was that Humanity might be identified with Divinity. In identifying Himself with man Christ identified man with Himself. It seems a startling statement, but there is no escape from it. He became in all things like unto His brethren, that His brethren might become in all things like unto Him. The "in all things" is co-extensive. The identification is as complete on the one side as on the other. All that the Man Christ Jesus is by nature, the man in Christ becomes by grace. The identification is as complete as the renunciation was without reserve. In Christ man becomes as Christ, just as truly as in the Incarnation Christ became as man. All that Christ is we become, all that Christ has we have, the works that Christ did we may do. The man in Christ is one with Christ, even as Christ is one with the Father.

There are seven points of identification set forth in the New Testament.

I. RELATIONSHIP.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the first thing He does for the man who comes to Him is to give him the right of sonship. He lifts man into the same relationship with the Father as Himself. The method is different and the degree is different. Jesus is the only-begotten Son of the Father, but what the Christ is by nature the man in Christ becomes by adoption. By nature we are aliens and strangers, enemies and rebels, but "to as many as received Him to them gave He the right to become sons of God." "For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God." The identification of the Son of God with man has made it possible for sinful men to become sons of God.

S. John
i. 12.

Rom. viii.
15, 16.

2. NATURE.

Jesus Christ partook of man's nature, that man might be made a partaker of the Divine nature. "That through these ye may become partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." Nature is stronger than condition. A child may be taken from vicious surroundings, transplanted to new

2 Pet. i.
4.

conditions, adopted into new relationships, and given a new name, but the old nature tells. It is easier to give a new home and a new name than a new nature. - But in the work of grace Adoption is accompanied by Regeneration. The sons of God are born of God. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. The old nature is put off, and a Divine nature takes its place. The Lord's image, defaced in Adam, is renewed in Christ. The Son of God took hold on humanity that sinful men might take hold on His Divinity. What a Gospel! The nature of the God-Man to become the possession of fallen and sinful men! "As He is, so are we."

3. POSSESSIONS.

"If sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." When a man in high social position marries a poor woman, he does not come to her level, but lifts her to his. He does not divest himself of all his possessions, but invests her with all he has. She shares his name, his rank, his wealth, his home. She becomes identified with him. They are one. Christ calls us His Bride. He came down to the level of our poverty that He might lift us to the level of His rank and wealth. We are one. He has no wealth we do not share. All the resources of grace, wisdom, and power are at the disposal of His own. He withholds nothing. The riches of His glory

¹ *John*
iv. 17.

Rom.
viii. 17.

are the inheritance of His saints. The peculiar possessions of Jesus are His Spirit, and the infinite merit of His sacrifice. The Spirit He has poured out without measure, and in the gift of His merit is the fulness of our salvation, and our hope in prayer. He took our poverty; we receive His wealth.

4. CHARACTER.

Identification in relationship, nature, and possessions, involves correspondence of character. The end of all grace is holiness. We are made partakers of all these privileges in Christ that we may reflect His Spirit and reproduce His life. There is no greater exhortation than this, “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” *Phil. ii.* Identification involves identity. If we are one with Him, we must be like Him. The test of life is its fruit. If we share His life, we shall follow in His steps. Christ not only gave His life for us; He imparts it to us. His life is our life. He who died for men lives in men. It is the same Christ that lived among men that now lives in them, and the manifest life therefore is His. The badge and test of a Christian is Christ-likeness.

5. EXPERIENCE.

The completeness with which Jesus identifies His people with Himself is manifest in all His dealings with His disciples. “He that receiveth you, receiveth me.” “If the world hateth you, *S Matt. x. 40.*
S. John xv. 18.

ye know that it hath hated Me before it hated you.”
 “It is enough that the servant be as his lord.”
 In all things they might expect to share His lot in the world, and all their afflictions He would make His own. What was done to them would be done to Him, so completely were they one. They must share His experience in the world. That, however, was not all. They should share the peace and joy of His own soul. “My peace I give unto you”; “These things have I spoken unto you that My joy may be in you.” The very peace that reigned in His own heart should dwell in theirs. The very joy of Christ’s own soul should abide in them through all adversity and trial. The heart of the believer becomes as the heart of his Lord. His life is our life, His peace our peace, His joy our joy. His assurance of the Father’s smile, His delight in the Father’s service, His joy in the Father’s fellowship, His rest in the Father’s will, all these are ours, for we are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.

6. MISSION.

We are “called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” That fellowship is a fellowship of service. We are called into partnership in the work of the Son of God. He said to His disciples, “*We* must work the works of Him that sent Me.” His commission after His resurrection was, “As the Father hath sent Me,

S. John
xiv. 27.

1 Cor. i.
9.

S. John
ix. 4.

S. John
xx. 21.

even so send I you." "Go ye . . . and lo, I am with you." His Mission is our mission, His work our work. We are partners in the same undertaking, yoke-fellows in the same toil.

S. Matt.
xxviii.
19, 20.

7. REWARD.

They who are one with Him in service and suffering will be one with Him in reward. The identification is complete even to the last. Listen! Here is the consummation of it all. Here is the crowning wonder of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with Me in My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father in His throne." We share His very throne. The faithful enter at last into the joy of their Lord. In Heaven the identification is complete, and man stands higher than the angels, for Christ the Son of God has lifted him to the level of His throne. What a Gospel! What a miracle of grace! What a glorious purpose! The Son of God in all things Son of Man, that the sons of men may be as the Son of God.

Rev. iii.
21.

III. MAN'S LIFE IN CHRIST.

Identification involves correspondence. If the man in Christ is to be one with Christ, and in all things like Christ, the governing principles at the root of each life must be the same; and if the root principles are identical, the practical manifesta-

tions must correspond. The standard of Christ's life was His Father's will, the dynamic of His life was the Holy Spirit, and the joy of His life was the assured approval of His Father. These are essential to every Christ-like life: CONSECRATION, PENTECOST, OBEDIENCE. The life is impossible where the consecration is incomplete; it is possible only in the power of the Spirit; and it can only be maintained by continual abiding in assured and approved obedience in the will of God. Surrender, receive, abide! These are the key-words of the Christ-life.

These root principles reproduce the character of the Master. The Man Christ Jesus is the standard and pattern in all things to the man in Christ. In character, grace answers grace, feature corresponds with feature, till in all things the resemblance is complete. It is not simply a faithful copy, but the manifestation of the one spirit. The life is one. The life of the man in Christ is the life of the Man Christ Jesus, who dwells in Him. The mind that is in Him is the mind that was in Christ. He loves as Christ loved, walks as He walked, and forgives as Christ forgave him. In service and suffering he takes Christ's example of both method and spirit. Even the sacrificial death of Christ has its corresponding quality in the Christian life, and the man in Christ lays down his life because the Man

Phil.
ii. 5.

S. John
xv. 12.

1 John
ii. 6.

Eph. xiv.
32.

S. John
xiii. 15.

1 Pet. ii.
20.

1 John
iii. 16.

Christ Jesus laid down His. Sonship leads to correspondence. We are children of God, and because we are children we know that we shall be like Him, even our bodies being fashioned anew that they may be conformed to the body of His glory. ¹ John iii. 2.

How can a sinful man become as the sinless Christ? By identifying himself with Christ. The identification must be mutual, and avowed. Christ came from Heaven to identify Himself with man, and man must come out from the world to identify himself with Christ. Come out! "Come unto Me!" Identification must be followed by mutual indwelling. "Ye in Me, and I in you." "I have been crucified with Christ," says Paul, "yet I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." Christ-likeness is the spontaneous expression of an indwelling life. That which fills the heart rivets the mind, and contemplation transforms the man. ² Cor. iii. 18.

The last word in the process is discipline. SEPARATION, INDWELLING, MEDITATION, DISCIPLINE. Providence works to the same end as grace. "And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also fore-ordained *to be conformed to the image of His Son.*" "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what ¹ John iii. 2.

we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him even as He is."

Sometimes in the country I have stood and watched the village blacksmith at work, and for a long time could not make out the use of his little hammer. The big hammer I could understand, but why the smith should strike in turns the anvil and the iron puzzled me. One day I ventured to ask for an explanation, and found that the little hammer regulates the stroke of the big one. The smith holds the glowing metal, turning it lest the stroke fall too often upon the same spot, directing the blows that they may descend at the right moment ; turning, tempering, regulating till the metal is fashioned to the desired shape. So God holds the soul and regulates the stroke. Sometimes He makes the Devil His hammer-man. Satan strikes to smash. God regulates the stroke, and turns his malice to our perfecting, and the Devil sweats at the task of fashioning saints into the likeness of Christ. At the end of the day we shall find that all life's discipline has worked together with grace, and that we stand complete in our identification with the Son of the Father. The glorious purpose will have been accomplished, and we shall be like Him.

Ps. xvii. 15

" I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness."

THE DIVINE SERVANT

“Behold, My servant whom I have chosen ;
My beloved in whom My soul is well pleased :
I will put My spirit upon Him,
And He shall declare judgement to the Gentiles.
He shall not strive, nor cry aloud ;
Neither shall any one hear His voice in the streets
A bruised reed shall He not break,
And smoking flax shall He not quench,
Till He send forth judgement unto victory.
And in His Name shall the Gentiles hope.”

—*S. Matt.* xii. 18-21

THE DIVINE SERVANT

THE quotation is from the forty-second chapter of Isaiah. In that prophecy the passage marks a distinct stage. The burden of the prophet up to that point had been the aloneness of God and the unique character of His people. He is the Lord, and there is none beside Him. All nations are under His sovereign rule. The falseness and folly of idolatry have been mercilessly exposed, and Jehovah's power over all peoples so fully demonstrated as to destroy Israel's hope in her alliance with foreign nations. He is their defence and their hope. He has chosen Israel for His own. In the second portion of the prophecy Jehovah reveals the purpose of Israel's call in His larger purpose for the world. He unfolds a missionary programme for the deliverance and restoration not of Israel only, but of all. The God in whom there is everlasting strength will come to the deliverance of the captive, and to the help of the poor and needy. Darkness shall disappear at His coming ; He will open rivers upon bare heights, and fountains in the midst of valleys ; the wilder-

ness shall become a pool, and in the dry land shall be springs of water ; the desert shall become a fruitful field, and the wilderness rejoice and blossom as a rose. All the nations of the earth He will lead forth unto light and liberty, righteousness and peace shall be established, and love and laughter, prayer and song, shall fill the land.

This glorious programme is identified throughout with One who is named the Lord's Servant. This Servant is commissioned to carry out the Divine purpose. The description of His service and sufferings extends to the end of the prophecy, and is the most precious portion of the Old Testament Scriptures. This Servant of the Old Testament is the Christ of the New. He lived in the consciousness that He was the Servant of the Lord, recognised the obligation, gloried in the Name ; and here the prophet's description is directly applied to Him.

The passage is quoted in explanation of Christ's withdrawal from the scene of contention to a place of seclusion, and of His injunction of silence upon those He healed. He had come into open conflict with the Pharisees on the question of the Sabbath. Their religious susceptibilities were outraged by His irreligious ways. He defied traditional authority, and ignored the restrictions of conventional piety. He kept company with disreputable people who plucked ears of corn on

the Sabbath day. They challenged His loyalty to the Sabbath. He tore their plea for pious observance to tatters, and backed His argument by a work of healing in the Holy Temple itself on the sacred day. The Pharisees were silenced but not convinced. To be worsted in argument leads to chagrin and hate rather than to conviction. "They went out, and took counsel against Him, how they might destroy Him. And Jesus perceiving it withdrew from thence." He would not stay to foment strife, and retired in the hope that elsewhere He might quietly pursue His ministry of instruction and mercy. But He could not be hid. "Many followed Him and He healed them all, and charged them that they should not make Him known." Everywhere His appearance brought together great crowds, and was the signal for tumult and excitement. These things were inevitable, but He never sought them. He shrank from sensational notoriety, and strove to avoid conflict and uproar. In this, says the Evangelist, He realised the prophetic ideal of the Servant of the Lord, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the Prophet, saying : "Behold My Servant."

S. Matt.
xii. 14,
15, 16.

I. THE DIVINE SERVANT AND HIS LORD.

The very title arrests us, and the paradox of a Divine Servant and His Lord seems to be a contradiction of terms. What is a servant? We

have almost forgotten what the word implied in the days of Christ, when service was so largely identified with bondage ; but even yet the root significance remains unchanged. A servant is a person who is at the disposal of another. It may be a voluntary or a compulsory service, but so long as a man is a servant he exists to do the will of his master, to carry out his plans, and represent his interests. He has no separate will, no separate interests, no separate programme. While he is a servant, he is another's possession. All that he has of brain and muscle, nerve and heart, is laid at the disposal of another's will. He receives his commands and obeys them. They may not commend themselves to his judgement, he may not like the work assigned to him, he may think there is a better way of doing it, but he cannot pick and choose either the work to be done or the time and manner of doing it. His one and only business is to carry out his master's will ; to refuse obedience means to quit his service.

This title is given to Jesus. He does not repudiate it, but welcomes it with all its obligations, and glories in its opportunities. There is no sense of antagonism in the Son being a Servant, and the equal being subordinate. "I and the Father are one." "I am in the midst of you as He that serveth." His first recorded speech combines the twofold relationship in the one

person : “ Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business ? ” The Son of God and the Servant of the Lord ! He came from His baptism, where the Father had witnessed to His Sonship, and opened His commission with Isaiah’s words concerning the Servant :

S. Luke
ii. 49.

“ The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the
poor ;
He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised.
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

S. Luke
iv. 18, 19.

The urgency of a great mission was upon Him when He said, “ We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is yet day : the night cometh when no man can work.” The consciousness of it never left Him. He always claimed to be the Sent of God, and He lived to do not His own will but the will of the Father who sent Him. He gloried both in the title and the service. “ The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” In the same night in which He was betrayed, He took a towel and girded Himself and washed the feet of His disciples, setting them an example of lowly service. It is a great mystery but a glorious fact : One with God and yet His Servant. He had shared the Father’s glory before the world was, He was in the begin-

S. John
ix. 4.

S. Matt.
xx. 28.

S. John
xiii. 4.

ning with God, and was Himself God, but He came as a Servant in all things obedient to the Father's will.

In all His life of ministry, Jesus Christ, as the Servant of the Lord, was fully assured of three things :—

1. That He was chosen of God ; “ Behold My Servant whom I have chosen.”

2. That He dwelt deep in the love of the Father ; “ My beloved.”

3. That in all things He had the approval of God ; “ In whom I am well pleased.” CHOSEN : BELOVED : APPROVED.

CHOSEN. These great certainties were the sheet anchor of His soul and the secret of His strength. Who can measure the strength He found in the assurance of His Divine commission ? He was the Sent of God. That is the conviction that inspires and sustains for heroic service. The voice of God in the soul creates the fiery prophet and transforms commonplace men and women into the valiant of the Lord. The called are invested with the glory and entrusted with the power of the one who calls. The servant of the state finds his personality identified with the glory of the empire he represents. He is clothed with its strength and ennobled by its glory. He speaks for the state, stands for the state, and commands the resources of the state. Of himself he would count for little,

but as the sent of an empire he becomes the embodiment of an empire. If a state commission works such wonders in a man, what must a Divine commission be? Sent of God, ordained of the Most High, commissioned of Heaven, the Servant of the Lord is identified with the Almighty, clothed with the glory of the Eternal, sustained by all the resources of the Infinite.

Through all the chequered course of His ministry this conviction never faltered; the Father had chosen and sent Him, the words He spake were the words of His Father, the works He did were not His own. He did all things by the authority of God. In this He is our Exemplar. As He was the chosen Servant of Jehovah, so also are His own servants chosen and sent. “Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you.” As He was chosen of God, so we are chosen and appointed of Him. “As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you.” He chooses His servants; that prerogative He has never relegated to Pope, Prelate, or Presbyter. The right is His own. The call of man is a poor substitute for the call of God. Chosen, called, sent of God; with that conviction in his soul, a man becomes strong in the strength of Eternal Might. Even Calvary was possible to the chosen Servant of Jehovah.

S. John
xv. 16.

S. John
xx. 21.

“BELOVED.” All through His life Jesus was fully assured of the Father’s love. How often

S. John
iii. 35 ;
v. 20 ;
xvii. 24 ;
xv. 10

He falls back upon that assurance ! “ The Father loveth the Son.” “ Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.” “ I have kept My Father’s commandment and abide in His love.” To know the love of the Father is to know the love that passeth knowledge, and to reveal it unto men was the supreme glory of His beloved Son. Twice the Father openly declared His love, but what was twice openly declared, was constantly assured. He came from the bosom of the Father, and knew that the heart of the Father never changed. However terrible His lot, however hard His task, however disappointing His toil, however deep His humiliation, however faithless His friends or bitter His enemies, He never doubted that God loved Him. The fiercest temptation and the darkest Gethsemane failed to disturb His confidence in the Father’s love. A child of my acquaintance said one day, “ I am glad God loves me.” “ Yes,” said the mother, “ and are you not glad you love Him ? ” “ Yes,” replied the child, “ but I am not so sure about that.” I do not think the child understood the significance of its words, but out of the mouths of babes God still perfects praise. Our love may fluctuate, be confused with our feelings, be influenced by a thousand forces we cannot understand, till we are not quite sure about it. But we can always be sure of the love of God, and it is the love we trust that saves,

Because it is so precious it is always the centre of attack. The Devil is always seeking to cast doubt upon the Father's love. "If Thou art the Son of God." Why? Every man can supply Satan's suggestion from his own experience. Why hunger? Why persecution? Why hardship? Why affliction? Why loss? Jesus never swerved from His unquestioning faith in the love of the Father. It is the one thing we can be sure of, and is the one thing of which we need most to be assured. The Father loves, the child can trust.

S. Matt.
iv. 3.

APPROVED. "In whom My soul is well pleased." Twice God openly spoke His approval. At the beginning of His ministry He presented Himself in baptism, and God spoke out of the Heavens: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." At the close of His ministry He presented Himself as the Sacrificial Lamb in the Holy Mount, and again God spake: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." The approval thus openly avowed was constantly assured to the consciousness of the Son. Everybody else disapproved. At one stage or other of His work everybody lost faith in Him. His relatives doubted His sanity, and His enemies said He was possessed of a devil, the Church denounced Him, the State condemned Him, the multitude mocked Him, His disciples forsook Him,

S. Matt.
iii. 17.

S. Matt.
xvii. 5.

and an Apostle betrayed Him. He trod the winepress alone, but God was with Him. There was no controversy between the Servant and His Lord. God, who had chosen Him, trusted and approved. That is the faith that sustains. He could say, "He that sent Me is with Me; He hath not left Me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." He stood fully assured in all the will of God. He knew that all His life was approved of the Father. With that assurance the elect stand unmoved; though solitary, invincible; though beset on every side, true to God whether men praise or blame.

These are the three great certainties of all true servants of Jehovah. Chosen of God, beloved of God, approved of God. In all these things the servant of Christ is as his Lord; chosen as He was chosen, beloved as He was beloved, approved as He was approved. At the back of all true service for man there must be the realised purpose of God, and pervading all humanitarian activities there must be a Divine compassion. Service without God lacks foundation, inspiration, and permanence; it is cut off from the only source that can save it from selfishness and disaster. Servants chosen, beloved, and approved of God, are the saviours of men.

II. THE SERVANT'S EQUIPMENT.

Whom the Lord sends He equips; "I will put

My spirit upon Him." The complete equipment of the servant is in the enduement of the Spirit. The explanation of Christ's earthly life lies in three great passages : " He emptied Himself " ; " He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God : for He giveth not the Spirit by measure " ; " In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in the self-emptied Christ, in the presence of the Divine Spirit given unto Him without measure of the Father. The subject of Christ's relation to the Spirit during His earthly ministry is full of interest and profound practical teaching, but it is one which demands great delicacy and accuracy of thought and statement. All themes that lead us into the inter-relations of the Trinity are " hard to be uttered " ; and yet without them it is impossible to know the great truths of the Christian faith, or to appreciate the greatness of our inheritance in Christ.

Phil. ii. 6.

*S. John
iii. 34.*

Col. ii. 9.

In all the work of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the Personal Agent of the Godhead. He is the sent of the Father and the Son. In Creation, Providence, and Redemption, He is the Executive Agent and Active Administrator. In the life of Jesus He fulfils the same mission. At every stage the Servant-Son works under the guidance and in the power of the Spirit. We rarely realise the dependence of the Christ in His earthly career

upon the Spirit of God. The Prophet saw it clearly enough. Not only is the promise recorded, "I will put My Spirit upon Him," but it is claimed by the Divine Servant of the prophecy, "The Lord God hath sent Me, and His Spirit." His body was prepared of the Spirit; the opening faculties of the Child were under the control of the Spirit; for His ministry He was baptised with the Spirit; His teaching was by the inspiration of the Spirit; His miracles were wrought in the power of the Spirit; He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil; and in the power of the Spirit He returned from the wilderness to preach and heal. In all things He was directed, enlightened, empowered by the Spirit of God.

This is true not only of the activities of His ministry, but also of His sacrificial death and glorious resurrection. It was "through the eternal Spirit" He "offered Himself without blemish unto God"; and it was by the same Spirit He was raised from the dead. From Bethlehem to Bethany, from the Incarnation to His Ascension, the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, preserving, directing, equipping Him in all the will of God. In this also, the servant of Christ is as his Lord. As the Father gave unto Him, so gives He unto His own. The resources of the Spirit are ours as unreservedly as they were His.

Isa. lxi. 1
and
xlvi. 16.

Heb. ix. 14.

Rom. viii. 2.

The servants are prepared, equipped, instructed, empowered by the Spirit for all the will of God as truly as was the Christ Himself. He is to us as to Him the Active Agent of the Godhead, and holds for us all the resources of the Infinite. Who can measure man's possibilities in the power of the Eternal Spirit ?

III. THE SERVANT'S MISSION.

The commission defines the work of the Servant. He is sent to declare judgement to the Gentiles, to send forth judgement unto victory, and to bring the Gentiles to hope in His Name. In a word, He came to establish judgement in the earth. What is judgement and whose judgement did He come to establish ? It is not judgement in the sense of a judicial sentence, though His coming brought judgement to both the world and its Prince. His presence is always a judgement, dividing, separating, condemning, or approving. It is not of His office as Judge, however, the word is here spoken. He came to declare judgement in the sense of bringing the Divine standard for the measurement of all things upon earth ; to so reveal the Father as to establish in the midst of men His standard of equity, righteousness, mercy, and truth ; it means that He came to bring all things into line with the character of God, restore all things to the pattern of the Divine mind, and so make His judgement the standard of life and con-

duct that the world shall be in all things governed according to His will. He is sent to destroy the works of the Devil and to restore the world to the Divine order. That is the Mission of Jesus Christ ; not to Judaize the world, but to save it ; not to proclaim a creed, but to correct the life ; not merely to reveal the truth, but to bring all things under its dominion.

Judgement suggests law, and the Mission of Jesus is a mission in the interest of law. He exemplified it in His life, satisfied it in His death, and is establishing it in the world by His Spirit. He saves that which was lost by bringing it back within the will of God. The call to repentance recalls man to the allegiance of an outraged law. He poured out His soul unto death that God might be just, and the Justifier of guilty men. Everything that is dark and devilish, ignorant and selfish, degrading and unjust, comes of disobedience, and Jesus seeks to restore men to the image and character of God. That is the work the Servant of the Lord has undertaken : to drive wrong out of men and out of the world, and to put right, men, nations, and the world—a task that demands the resources of God !

The purpose of Jehovah is world-wide. There is nothing parochial in the Almighty ; “ The earth is the Lord’s.” The exclusiveness of Israel was utterly at variance with the terms of the

Covenant. The elect race was chosen for the blessing of all nations, and the Servant of Jehovah is ordained for the redemption of all peoples. The horizon of the Messiah was the boundary of the Universe. Beyond His Cross He saw all men drawn unto Him. The Apostles were commissioned to disciple all nations. The heathen are His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth His possession. In Him shall the Gentiles hope. He brings light to them that sit in darkness, liberty for all that are in bondage, and the ministry of compassion to them that are weak. The law of God which is the love of God, and the love of God which is the law of love, will send forth judgement unto victory, and make the days upon the earth as the days that are in Heaven.

IV. THE SERVANT'S TEMPER AND METHOD.

The Temper and Method of the Servant are described as specifically as the purpose is defined. A representative must embody in himself the spirit of those by whom he is sent. The Lord who sends this Servant says, "He shall not strive, nor cry aloud, neither shall anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench." Such is the character and method of the God-sent Deliverer. It seems woefully inadequate to the task undertaken. Is it in this temper and by such means the works of the Devil can be destroyed?

Can such meekness overturn ancient systems of falsehood ? Will the entrenched forces of organised vice and greed ever be dislodged by the gentleness that cares for bruised reeds and smoking flax ? Such a mission seems to demand a trumpet-blast, and a display of majesty and might that would strike terror among the nations, but He comes neither striving, nor crying, meek in spirit, and gentle in manner, apparently more concerned about the weakness and suffering of worthless people than founding an empire. John declared He would come with axe, and fan, and fire ; but when He came, He carried neither axe, nor fan, nor fire in his hand. When the fiery Baptist saw Him spending His days over single reeds that were ready to perish, he doubted whether this could be the Christ who had come to establish a Kingdom. And yet, this gentle Servant-Son is, after all, but the reflection of His Lord. He claims no originality. He simply represents the Father ; speaks His words, does His works, obeys His will. Patience and gentleness are not new features in the Divine method. The ways of Jehovah from the beginning have been marked by pity, forbearance, and gentleness. In this the Servant-Son is the image of the Father.

This description of Christ's character is remarkable for its omissions. It is a striking list of negatives. " He shall not strive, nor cry, nor lift up

His voice in the streets ; He will not break the bruised reed, and the smoking wick, He will not quench." Absent features are as impressive and instructive as the things that are present. The Spirit instructs by a process of exclusion. The absence of blemish implies a positive perfection. "In Him was no sin" expresses the flawless perfection of the Son of God, and these negatives lead us to the perfections of His ministry.

"HE SHALL NOT STRIVE." He was often contending, but never contentious. He was not given to idle controversy. He waged war, but He was no wrangler. He never strove for personal triumph, nor expended His zeal over trifles and side issues. Men given to strife forget the broad bases of truth in their zeal for points. Shallowness is always eager to secure a "point." They were great on points in Christ's day ; points of law, points of ritual, and points of conduct, but Christ never contended for trifles. He grasped essentials and laid bare eternal principles. The man with a great and solemn mission does not strive.

"HE SHALL NOT CRY." He was no screamer. In all His ministry there was nothing loud. He might have startled, but He restrained His power. His works were of pure beneficence and never for advertisement. He who is sent of God can afford to be quiet ; his silence is the reserve of strength, not the dumbness of fear.

“NEITHER SHALL ANYONE HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREETS.” Jesus was hard on street religion. He poured withering scorn on paraded piety, and ostentatious generosity. He bade His disciples pray in secret and give without ostentation. When He prayed, He ascended to lonely heights, or retired to solitary places. He sought no notoriety. He did not advertise Himself. He was meek and lowly in heart. He exalted others, but He humbled Himself.

This marked absence of self-assertion is accompanied by an equally marked absence of violence and impatience. “A BRUISED REED SHALL HE NOT BREAK, AND SMOKING FLAX SHALL HE NOT QUENCH.” He was patient and gentle with bruised, broken, and disappointing people. Every expositor has his own illustration for the bruised reed, but whatever the particular instance, it means that Jesus Christ gave special care to what others would have broken and thrown aside. He saw possibilities of good where others saw nothing but weakness, or worse. The reed may have broken in His hand and pierced Him, but He did not cast it away. There was no haste, no bitterness, no severity in Him toward those who had broken under the stress and strain of life’s burden and sin. He was full of pity for the bruised and despised.

Neither did He quench the smoking flax. Nothing is more offensive than a smoking wick. In-

stead of giving light, it blinds the eyes with smoke and stinks in the nostrils. Some Christians do not shine, they smoke. They add offensiveness to weakness; their virtue has smouldered into an offence. Nothing is easier than to snuff out such people by ridicule and contempt. But Jesus did not quench the smoking wick. Where there was smoke, there remained the possibility of a flame, and He sought by patient and tender sympathy to nurse it back into brightness and beauty. He saw possibilities in the weakest, and potential goodness in the worst. By His gentle patience He makes the bent to stand erect, and the foulest to be a clear and shining light in the world.

This is the method of Jehovah, and by it He will save the world. The saving energy of the Divine Presence is not in the whirlwind, neither is it in the earthquake or the fire, but in the still small voice. Men have always been impatient with Jehovah. His apparent leisure seems a crime in the presence of the world's woe. They are for demonstration, revolution, and rapid movement. Their eager haste would save in battalions, sweep continents, overturn dynasties, and establish the kingdom of righteousness in a day. God is never in a hurry and to Him there are no crowds. Short cuts to dominion are of Satan, not of God. It is not by trumpets and banners, not by sensational demonstrations of power, but

by holy living, patient forbearance, and loving ministry that the world will be saved. The work may seem slow, and the method inadequate, but the Servant of the Lord will not fail, nor be discouraged, till He have set judgement in the earth; and the isles shall wait for His law.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

“ From that time began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.

“ Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”—*S. Matt.* xvi. 21, 24.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

THE Cross came into full view at Cæsarea Philippi. How long it had been present to the consciousness of Jesus before that is a matter of controversy. Some contend that the ultimate issue of His ministry was known to Him from the beginning; others that it was forced upon Him by the failure of His Mission, and never definitely accepted till the Cæsarean crisis. There can hardly be any doubt, however, that it was known to Him from the hour of His Baptism. His words on that occasion show that He was not ignorant of the Messianic teaching of the Prophets, and that He understood the far-reaching significance of that symbolic act.

Whatever Christ's previous consciousness may have been, there can be no doubt as to the significance of this crisis. It marks a new departure. There is another tone in His speech, a marked straitening of soul, and a distinct focussing of interest and activity. From this point He moved with a set face toward Calvary.

The Cross was His one theme, and the accomplishment of its Sacrifice His supreme passion. He was girded for its Baptism. The occasion of the crisis is instructive. There is often a commentary in a map and an exposition in a date. The expression, "From that time" marks the two great divisions of S. Matthew's Gospel. In chapter iv. 17 we read, "From that time began Jesus to preach." The text tells us, "From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer . . . and be killed, and the third day be raised up." In each, the time marks both an end and a beginning. The first marks the end of a preparation and testing, and the beginning of the preaching ministry of Christ; the second marks the end of the preaching, and the beginning of the end.

The chapters from iv. 17 to xvi. 20 contain the record of Christ's preaching of the Kingdom. Its principles are stated, expounded, and applied; its operations explained and illustrated; and its promises set forth, in parable, miracle, argument, and instruction. At Cæsarea He tested the result of His teaching. He inquired of His disciples: "Who do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah or one of the Prophets." Then came

the direct question, "But who say ye that I am?" Peter, speaking for the rest, said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Then came the gracious benediction explaining the confession to its confessors, forecasting their commission and power, and a charge that they should tell no man that He was the Christ. "From that time!" The work of the preaching is accomplished; they have received His message and discovered in Him the Messiah. The theme changes from the Messiah and the Kingdom to the Christ and the Cross. The preaching is over, and the propitiation begins. From that time the Cross is His theme. Having discovered the Messiah, they must now learn the necessity for His suffering and death, and their own partnership in His Cross of shame. The Cross He must bear, and it is as necessary for the disciples as for their Lord.

I. THE CROSS IS THE ONE CONDITION OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP.

The reference is not now to the Cross as an object of faith, but as an experience of the soul. Not that the Atonement is forgotten, or its necessity overlooked; but the Cross which is received by faith becomes a saving power only as it is realised in the life. Just as the Cross was the Christ's only way to the Eternal priesthood, so it is the disciples' only way to realised

salvation. The Master's rebuke of Peter brings out the startling truth that the Cross is the central and universal condition of the Kingdom. The Apostle besought Jesus to spare Himself, to escape, to turn aside from suffering and death. Christ flung the suggestion from Him. In it He saw the essence of worldliness and a temptation of the devil. The wisdom of the world is self-sparing, self-shielding, self-seeking. *Spare thyself* is the sum of its philosophy and its invariable policy. The doctrine of the Kingdom is not *spare*, but *sacrifice*. To shirk the Cross is to miss the Kingdom. Not only must Jesus go up to Jerusalem and be killed, but every man that would come after Him must also take up the Cross. The *must* is as imperative in the one as in the other. Mediatorially the Cross of Christ stands alone, but experimentally it is shared by all who enter into life.

The principle is not exceptional. It is true of all life. To spare is to die. Sacrifice is essential to life. "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it." The life lost is the life found. The peculiarity of the Christian life is that this principle is symbolised in the Cross. Elsewhere it is called death, and is the inevitable condition of development. Here it is the Cross, and it is important that the

significance of the Cross in discipleship should be clearly defined and realised.

WHAT DOES THE CROSS STAND FOR ?

It is to be feared that to many the Cross means nothing more than reluctant obedience to disagreeable duties, or the grudging denial of some pleasant habit. They imagine themselves bearing the cross when prodded at the point of conscience, or abstaining from things earnestly desired. Such people turn their cross into a weapon with which to afflict other people. They are apt to parade their own virtue, and impose their own cross upon others. Such conceptions of cross-bearing are as Pharisaic as they are false, and as mischievous as they are erroneous. In the New Testament the Cross stands for definite realities which embody the essential features of the Christian Kingdom. It is the sign of reproach, the altar of sacrifice, and the expression of vicarious service.

THE CROSS STANDS FIRST OF ALL FOR THE REPROACH AND CONDEMNATION OF AN ALIEN POWER. The Cross was not Jewish ; it was Roman. The sting of its suffering was its shame. The physical agony was great, but that does not account for its abhorrence. It was hated because it was the imposition of a foreign power, the ultimate assertion of a pagan authority, and the condemnation of a despised and hated conqueror.

Crucifixion to the Jew was the lowest depth of humiliation and shame. It was an alien judgement pursuing him even unto death. The disciple of Christ bears a Cross. He stands condemned by the power of an alien. The world hated Christ and killed Him. They are still in antagonism. He who would be with Christ must come out from the world and share His reproach and condemnation. If the world crucified Christ, it will not be more tolerant of His followers. He warned us to expect for ourselves the treatment it gave to Him. Hence the first condition is the Cross.

From "that time" He drove home this truth. Upon all who came to Him He laid the burden of the Cross. Three candidates presented themselves for discipleship. The first said, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Jesus said unto him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." He would have the volunteer count the cost, and the hardship was not the heaviest part of it. What would the world say about the sanity of a man who followed an impoverished, unpopular, and homeless leader? Reflections cast upon the balance of our mental powers are harder to bear than pillows of stone. To a second who begged that he might first go and bury his father He

said, "Let the dead bury their dead, follow thou Me." What would be the world's judgement upon such conduct? How many of the kinsfolk and neighbours would understand the motive of such lack of filial devotion? Would they not rather upbraid him with vanity, neglect, and indifference? The reproaches of the living are sometimes harder to bear than the loss of the dead. To a third who wished to go and say farewell to those at home, He said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." The wrench of home ties is hard to sensitive and affectionate natures, but harder still is the suspicion of having slighted love and despised friends. The reproach of the world! The follower of Christ knows the burden of the Cross. The world doubts his sanity, impugns his motives, scorns his wisdom, and mocks his sacrifice.

It was here the rich young Ruler found his Cross. The Lord laid upon him the stern and apparently prohibitive condition: "If thou

S. Matt.
xix. 21, 22.

wouldst be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow Me. But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful for he was one that had great possessions." Much has been made, and not too

much, of the hardship of parting with great possessions; but the greatest obstacle was not in parting with his wealth. A soul afire with zeal would not be captured by love of ease and the power of wealth. What would his compeers say of such a course? Wealth and rank make men sensitive of the opinion of others. For the sake of them that sit at meat with him, many a Herod stifles his conscience and beheads the prophet. How could he sell his possessions at the bidding of a homeless peasant and face the world? That was his Cross, and he, shrinking, spared himself, and was lost to the Kingdom. So it is with us all. "Whosoever doth not bear his own Cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." The Cross is inevitable. No man can love the world and follow Christ.

S. Luke
xiv. 27.

THE CROSS STANDS FOR A LIFE VOLUNTARILY SURRENDERED TO THE WILL OF GOD. From the standpoint of the world the death of Christ was a murder, in its eternal aspect it was a Divine appointment, in the act of Christ it was a voluntary sacrifice. He Himself said, "I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." The Apostle Peter, speaking of the event on the Day of Pentecost, said, "Him being delivered up by the

John x.
17, 18.

Acts ii. 23.

determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay." He was a voluntary offering, not a helpless victim. The death of the Cross was the last demand upon His obedience. In its agony He endured sin's utmost penalty, sounded the deepest depths of human sorrow, and experienced the heartbreak of silent mystery. Never before had He turned to the Father with a Why? But, God-forsaken though He was, He still called Him "My God," and proved His trust in the darkness by commending His Spirit into His hands. He is our Exemplar. The obedience of the Christian must be as the obedience of Christ—voluntary, continuous, faithful. If obedience involve suffering, loss, mystery, then, like his Lord, he will not flinch in the darkness nor be afraid in the silence, but commit all things to the keeping and responsibility of the Eternal Father. This is the meaning of the Cross : consecration, obedience, trust.

THE CROSS STANDS FOR VICARIOUS SERVICE AND SUFFERING. "Christ died for us." He "bare our sins in His body upon the tree." "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him ; and with His stripes we are healed." That is

Rom. v. 8.

1 Pet. ii.
24.

Isa. liii.
4-6.

the explanation of the Cross. In the burden of sin-bearing the Saviour trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was no man with Him; and yet the disciple is called to the fellowship even of His Cross. The mind that inspired the sacrifice is imparted to His followers, and is imparted to inspire. The logic of Calvary is this, "Because He laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Trust in the death of Christ implies more than a recumbency upon His merit. Belief involves practice, and the man who believes in Christ accepts His principle of life and follows His example. Hence, practical compassion is the proof of faith as of love. Faith without works is dead. The salvation believed for is realised in vicarious ministry. If we love as He loved, we shall live as He lived.

If we are called to the fellowship of His suffering, as well as to partnership in His service, the essential features of motive and work must be the same in us as in Him. What does that mean in practical life? It means that the man who takes up the Cross and follows Christ lives in the will of God for the service of man. As the Son of God placed all the resources of His glory at the disposal of man's need, so every disciple abandons all to God for the blessing of man. He is God's steward, and the sphere of his

stewardship is in the sin and sorrow of the world. He becomes a co-worker with God in Christ Jesus. The experience of salvation leads to co-operation in the work of salvation. Acceptance of the Cross is a proclamation that its bearer stands in the midst of a sinful and burdened world in Christ's stead. The Cross calls to itself the weary and heavy laden, and pledges its bearer to lift their burdens and lead them into the way of rest. The Christian undertakes to be as Christ in the world, to do His work, to minister in His Spirit, and for this he lays all at the feet of his Lord.

This is bearing the Cross; sorrowing over the world's sin, bearing the world's burden, carrying the world's shame, ministering to the world's need, laying down our life for the world's salvation. This is the badge and test of discipleship. Have we taken up the Cross? Have we dared to come out from the world, antagonised ourselves to it, and borne its reproach? Are we surrendered in all things to the will of God? Has all been placed at His disposal and consecrated to His saving purpose among men? Have we returned to the world as Christ came to it? Do we weep over it, pray for it, live for it, die for it? It is for these the Cross stands, and without the Cross we cannot be Christ's disciples.

II. THE CROSS IS THE ONE WAY TO THE HIGHEST IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

*S. Matt.
vii. 1-13.* After Cæsarea came the Holy Mount. Jesus took with Him Peter, and James, and John into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them. Moses and Elias talked with the transfigured Lord, and their theme was the exodus to be accomplished at Jerusalem. They talked about the Cross. Peter the confessor and tempter at Cæsarea was the spokesman in the Mount, and He begged that they might build tabernacles for their Lord and His visitants. Then came the voice of the Father, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." As they came down from the Mount He charged them to tell no man of the vision till He was risen from the dead, as He had charged them at Cæsarea to tell no man that He was the Christ.

The Cross was the centre in that scene of glory. As they descended He told them again how the Son of Man must suffer and be killed, and no rebuke fell from the lips of Peter. In the Mount of Glory they had seen the interpretation of the Cross of shame. For six days they had brooded in the darkness of its shadow. For six days Peter had felt the sting of the terrible rebuke. For six days they had dwelt in sorrowful silence, full of perplexity and dread.

Then came the vision in which they beheld their Lord resplendent, radiant, glorious, and the contrast between the vision and their forebodings startled them into speech. This was what they desired for their Master; not death, but glory; not a Cross, but a Kingdom. It is the old impulse to spare that prompts the desire to stay. They all speak of the Cross. After Peter, Moses and Elijah; and after Moses and Elijah, God! The representatives of law and prophecy talk of the Cross which Peter despised, and God bids the Apostles hear His Son. The Cross over which earth sighed, Heaven sang. Rejected of men it is chosen of God for the highest expression of His glory.

The Cross is the centre of Heaven's glory as well as the sinner's hope. The New Jerusalem centres in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Vicariousness is Heaven's highest law. The principle of the Cross is not contingent upon man's sin, though its highest manifestation is in the sacrifice for sin. It is the eternal law of life, and blessedness, and glory. Moses and Elijah speak of the Cross as an "Exodus"; a way out of limitation and bondage into the liberty of the infinite. Beneath its rugged weight men rise, behind its stern expression they find the secret of peace, and through its agony they enter into bliss. Men lie down to die

and awake to life; they clasp a Cross and find a crown. If any man would ascend to the heights of true blessedness and fulness of glory, he must take up his Cross, and bearing it follow Christ, “who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” There is no way to the throne but by way of the Cross.

Heb. xii. 2.

*S. Matt.
xvii. 24.*

*S. Matt.
xviii. 1-4.*

*S. Matt.
xix. 27-29.*

*S. Matt.
xx. 20-28.*

How steadily Christ kept this before His disciples as He journeyed from the Mount to the grave! When He might have claimed exemption from the Temple tax, He waived His right and meekly paid, driving the Cross straight through the spirit that grasps its right. He answered the question as to who should be greatest by placing a little child in their midst, and telling them that in the Kingdom of the Highest the least is the greatest. To those who had left all and followed Him He promised that they should sit on the throne of His glory; in the present life there should be given them a hundredfold, and the inheritance of eternal life. The conditions of these thrones He set before the sons of Zebedee, who came seeking to secure those of greatest distinction. Their request was not denied, but they were shown the only way it could be granted. Thrones lie on the other side of Christ's cup and baptism.

They who would sit on the throne must drink His cup, and be baptised with His baptism. What are they? Vicarious service in lowly humility for others, and a life freely poured forth as a ransom for many. The Cross! It is always the Cross. Living to serve and dying to save, that is the way to thrones in His Kingdom. His last instruction was a lesson in the principle of the Cross. In the night in which He was betrayed He took bread, and when He had given thanks He brake it and said, "This is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the New Covenant in My blood; this do as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me." Supper ended, John tells us how the Saviour rose, and girding Himself with a towel, He washed the feet of His disciples. His own explanation of the act is that He had given them an example of how the lordly should serve the lowly. It was a practical demonstration of the doctrine of the Cross, and an illustration of how that doctrine should be applied in brotherly service. It is always the same central theme. The Cross is not simply an initial condition: it is the one continuous, all-inclusive law. It is laid upon the candidate and borne by the follower. It is the only way, but by it the soul finds life, distinction and glory.

1 Cor. xi.
23-25.

It is the one way to true privilege, it is the one way to true greatness, it is the one way to true power, and it is the one way to true brotherhood.

III. THE CROSS IS THE ONE WAY OF CHRISTIANITY'S PROPAGATION IN THE WORLD.

The third scene, of which the anticipated Cross is the centre, is in Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover within three days of the end. Nothing ever stirred the soul of Jesus like the coming of the Greeks at the close of that eventful day. Their presence opened to view the great harvest of souls He had come to gather. The hour of His glorification was at hand. Then there fell over His exultant soul the chill shadow of the Cross which lay between Him and the great soul-harvest. His soul was exceedingly troubled, the conflict of Gethsemane was upon Him, and in His sorrow He spake with Himself rather than to those around Him. Such speech is always self-revealing. What did He say in His soliloquy? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. . . . Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. (This is what I

will say), Father, glorify Thy Name. There came, therefore, a voice out of Heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. . . . Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for My sake, but for your sakes. Now is the judgement of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself."

By the Cross He judged the world and conquered the devil, and by the Cross He will draw all men unto Himself. To explain the necessity of the Cross for the salvation of the world He takes the parable of a grain of wheat, and in the profound mystery of its death and resurrection finds the similitude of Himself and His work of Redemption. Without death there can be no fruit. Only by laying down its life can the seed realise and propagate itself. He Himself is the Great Reality of the parable. Like the seed, He must die to bring forth others like Himself, and impart to them the quality of His own life. While unsown He abode alone, but from His grave there came forth others possessed of His spirit and quickened with His life. In Him was the life of men, but that life could only be given to men when He surrendered His own life for them.

The Cross supplies both the weapon and the method for the conversion of the world to

Christ. Because Christianity is life it cannot be imposed ; it can only be imparted. Life can only extend by propagation. Every soul has to be begotten. Souls born of God are begotten of the Spirit and of the Word, and the vehicle of quickening truth is found in living souls. It is of a travailing Zion the children of God are born. Soul begets soul. Living saints bring dead sinners to life. The conquest of revival waits on a quickened Church. Where there is defectiveness of organisation or deficiency of vitality, the Church is barren and the work of God is hindered. When the Church is passionless the world is indifferent, but an indifferent world is impossible where the Church is impassioned. So once again, it is the Gospel of the Cross, the Cross in experience, and not the Cross of orthodox but lifeless creeds. There is no salvation but by blood. The heart's blood of the follower is needed as well as the blood of the Lord. Silver and gold cannot save. The soul must be poured out if souls are to be saved. We too must die if we would not abide alone. Every true revival begins with a revived realisation of the Cross. Churches that are worldly, ease-loving, and self-centred are never Missionary. The Missionary spirit is born at Calvary. It is at the Cross the Evangel is born, and by the Cross it prevails.

There is only one Gospel for all peoples. The one Cross draws all men. It appeals to the humanity which is deeper than the distinctions of race. The Cross draws the cultured Greek, conquers the Roman warrior, and allures the Hebrew to itself. All nations are made of one blood, and need the one Gospel which reveals the love of God, and brings to men eternal life and delivering power. There is no saving power in the Cross without the power that is the outcome of its realisation in the heart, and there is no realisation without the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Cross is the way to Pentecost. The Spirit was not given till the Cross was accomplished and the Son of Man was glorified. The disciple must die with Christ to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The Cross! The Cross! Always the Cross! It is the way to God. In it, through it, by it, is everything that saves, sanctifies, and glorifies the soul of man. It is the way to purity, it is the way to power, it is the way to Pentecost, it is the way to service, it is the way to glory.

THE STANDARD MIRACLE

“That ye may know . . . the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.”—*Eph.* i. 18, 19, 20.

THE STANDARD MIRACLE

THE resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the New Testament standard of power. It is the sample and pledge of what God can do for man. In the Old Testament, the standard miracle was the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. From Moses to Malachi the appeal was to the Red Sea as the supreme demonstration of God's power to help and save. When the prophets sought to inspire courage and confidence, they pointed back to that mighty deliverance which brought up their fathers from the land of bondage; and when God renews His promise to Israel, He takes them back to the same spot and says, "As in the days of thy coming forth out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things." In the New Testament the Red Sea is superseded by the empty tomb, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead stands at the forefront of the Christian dispensation, as the greatest achievement of Omnipotence, and the standard of what God can do for them that believe.

Mic. vii.
15.

I. THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

In this Ephesians' passage, there is a remarkable gathering up of terms to emphasise the greatness of this act of power. Usually we conceive of God's works as done at the finger-tips of Omnipotence. There is no trace of effort, no sign of strain, no indication of any tax upon His strength. There can be no strain in the work of the Infinite. But in redemption God's resources seem to be taxed. Infinite love may be baffled and infinite power fail. In the work of salvation it would seem as if the Almighty had to rally His forces and gird His strength ; "That ye may know the exceeding greatness of His power, according to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead reveals the might of God working at the fulness of its strength. It is to the Christian what the Red Sea was to Israel. When we want to know what God is able to do, we go back to the resurrection of His Son.

This crowning miracle is inclusive of all others. It demonstrates conquest over every dominion that affects human life. Forces natural and spiritual, material and mental, temporal and eternal, were all proved to be under the dominion of the power that brought again the Lord Jesus from the dead. All miracles were accomplished

in the one act. Christ's miracles of healing, in which He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and power to palsied limbs, are described as "mighty works and wonders and signs"; in the resurrection all these were included in the one gift of life. In the one demonstration of power there came sight, hearing, speech, strength; every faculty was quickened and restored. That is true in every instance where the dead returned to life, but the resurrection of Jesus differed from all other resuscitations of which we have any knowledge. His resurrection was as unique as His death. Thrice Jesus raised the dead. The daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus of Bethany all returned to life at His call. These returned to life mortal; they were raised to die again. They were recalled and they returned. Jesus was not recalled. He came out from the region of death by a process of generation. He is the first-begotten from the dead, and dieth no more.

Another significant fact is that in every other instance of resurrection, the dead returned to life in their grave-clothes, embalmed, shrouded, bound hand and foot. When Jesus stepped out of the tomb He left His grave-clothes behind Him. These had not been unwound from His body and laid aside, but were left lying as when

they bound Him. The risen Christ did not take off His grave-clothes. He emerged from them as a butterfly emerges from its cocoon, and stepped forth, leaving the embalming cloths as they had bound His body lying in the tomb. Can we wonder that when Peter and John beheld the linen cloths thus lying, they believed?

A new order of life had been inaugurated. Jesus Christ is the first-begotten out of the dead. Having died unto sin once, He dieth no more. In Him mortality was swallowed up in life. His resurrection body was very different from the body of His humiliation. It had reached a sphere superior to the material limitations of the flesh. He seemed to move in the world with the freedom of an unencumbered spirit. He appeared and disappeared at will, and apparently regardless of material conditions. An order of life was begun, the like of which had not been seen in heaven or on earth, but which was to be shared by all who should be planted in the likeness of His resurrection.

Of the unique significance of the resurrection the Scriptures leave no room for doubt. It is God's crowning testimony to His Son, and the essential witness of the Christian Church. If Christ was not raised, we have no Gospel and no Saviour, for the Gospel of the New Testament is the Gospel of the Resurrection. Either Jesus

Christ is declared to be the Son of God with power in His resurrection from the dead, or His Gospel is a cunningly devised fable. Here is the crux of the whole matter, and the battle always comes back to this central point. The risen Christ is the soul and power of the Gospel, and if He be not raised then is our faith vain, and we are false witnesses of God. But Christ hath been raised, and hath shown Himself alive "by many infallible proofs." Paul claimed to have found proof of it in his own experience. He had not known Christ after the flesh, but he had seen the Lord. Not only has his experience evidential value of the resurrection, but the value of the resurrection is experimental rather than polemical. The best proof of the fact was to know the power that produced it, and the best use that could be made of the fact was to realise its power.

Spiritual identification is the end for which Christ died and rose again. This is dealt with at length in Romans vi. The meaning of that identification is that when Christ died, we died ; when He was buried, we were buried ; when He rose again, we also rose with Him ; when He ascended, we ascended, and dwell with Him in heavenly places ; and when He returns we also shall be manifested with Him in glory. The penalty of the sinner's guilt was paid when Christ died upon the Cross, and the power of His

resurrection life was secured for us when He rose again. Every sinner died when Christ died, and every sinner rose when the Last Adam was made a quickening Spirit. This identification of the race with Christ is personally realised, when it is personally appropriated. Salvation becomes a personal possession to all who, by personal faith, accept Jesus as their Representative and Lord. The moment a man recognises his identification with the work of Christ and accepts his place in Him, that moment the benefits of the Saviour's passion are realised in his soul. Our life springs from His grave. The same power, that brought again the Lord Jesus from the dead, quickens the soul of the believer into life.

II. SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION.

Regeneration is the spiritual counterpart of the resurrection. It is a birth out of death. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgement, but hath passed out of death into life." This is the believer's first resurrection, and he knows that he has passed out of death into life. Referring the Ephesians to the resurrection experience in their own life, the Apostle says, "And you did He quicken, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins." Conversion is the standing

S. John
v. 24.

1 John iii.
14.

Eph. ii. 1.

miracle of the power of God. It is the supreme work of Omnipotence. God never does anything mightier or more glorious than when He saves a soul from death, and brings it into living fellowship with Himself. It is the demonstration of the exceeding greatness of His power working in the strength of His might, and nothing less can quicken dead souls into life.

Some tell us that salvation is not a miracle, but a natural process ; that we are saved, not by the operation of a supernatural power, but by the ordinary processes of self-realisation and culture. They are for the most part men who have had no experience in seeking to save the lost. They look out upon life through the atmosphere of an academic world. Every teacher of theology ought to be an evangelist. It is in evangelism speculation finds corrective, and theories their surest test. Let every man prove his teaching in the open field of practical work before he urges it upon others. Social organisations that seek to improve the conditions of life have their place. Educational and philanthropic agencies render valuable help, and no help is to be despised, but there is no substitute for a New Birth. Nothing less than the gospel of resurrection power can save dead souls. In twenty years' experience in the work of salvation I have seen many experiments run their course. They began with

great expectations, and ended in dismal failure. It is pathetic to see the zealous and confident reformers return disillusioned and utterly dispirited, to confess they began at the wrong end. Salvation must be from within. The first requisite is a new nature, and to accomplish that demands the resources of the Infinite God.

Like the resurrection, the miracle of conversion includes in one act the salvation of the whole man. Regeneration secures all elements of reform. In it lies the solution of every kind of redemption—social, personal, domestic, and economic. The quickening power energises and sanctifies every part of the man, and the changed character soon secures improved conditions. The solution of every problem is found when the salvation of the man is secured. The completeness of the miracle is amazing. Like Christ, when the sinner steps out from the region of death, he leaves his grave-clothes behind him. Habits are the clothes of the soul. In one act, every evil habit of the old life is sloughed from the soul, and left in the tomb of the dead past. The habits of a life-time slip from him in a moment. Others try to save men by correcting one fault at a time, but when the power of God comes into the soul, it renews the man in every part, and turns him out a new creation in Christ Jesus. Suddenly, gloriously, and permanently, God

saves men from their sins. The conquest is immediate, complete, and abiding. That is the power of the Gospel. It has been demonstrated times without number. Men are dead, thrice dead, bound hand and foot, with a great stone rolled against the door of the tomb, and the Devil's watchers keeping guard. Can such men live? One day, the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead goes down into that grave, and the dead are quickened into life, old things are left behind, the stone is rolled away, the watchers are overthrown, and in the light of a glorious morning a new-born soul steps forth into a new world and a new life. It is Easter perpetuated in glory and in power.

THE SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION INAUGURATES A NEW LIFE.

“For if we have become united with Him *Rom. vi. 5.* by the likeness of His death, we shall be also by the likeness of His resurrection.” As Jesus Christ having died to sin once, dieth no more, but came back with a spiritual body to live the resurrection life, so the soul, quickened by this Divine power, enters upon a new life under new orders, and lives by a new power. The Christ that rose was the same Christ that was buried, and yet how different! He seems to have been released from the limitations of natural law. The body of His humiliation was subject to the

ordinary conditions of mortal life ; but the body of His resurrection rose above them. He seemed to move through space regardless of time and matter. At one moment in Emmaus, the next at Jerusalem, appearing suddenly in the midst of His disciples who sat with bolted doors, as mysteriously vanishing when the interview was ended, and yet in touch with all the interests of life. This also is an allegory.

The man who lives in the power of Christ's resurrection is raised to a plane of life beyond the limitations of the natural man. He lives under a Divine law, sustained by a Divine power ; he walks according to a Divine standard, and manifests the excellencies of the Divine character. The life which began in a miracle is miraculously sustained. The Christian life is impossible except in the power of God. Just as Peter, so long as his eye was fixed upon his Lord, maintained a miraculous walk, so the man, who steps out upon a new life, can maintain that walk only so long as he is sustained by Divine power. The Christian is called to live in the midst of earthly conditions according to a Divine standard. Many people think they sufficiently excuse their imperfections by pleading the limitations of human nature ; but the resurrection life is according to the possibilities of the Divine nature, and not according to the limitations of human nature.

Herein lies the possibility of holiness: "The Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you." We are made partakers of the Divine nature, and sustained by the power that brought again the Lord Jesus from the dead. Imputed righteousness becomes personal righteousness through the power of an imparted life. He who gave His life *for* us gives it *to* us in the person of His Spirit. The indwelling Christ makes all things possible. The risen Lord brings the fulness of abundant life to the soul. It is not by processes of education and evolution; it is the gift of God. The exceeding greatness of God's power is pledged to the perfection of them that believe.

Rom. viii.
11.

In a recent work of fiction there is a weird story of a wild man who went to live in a wild wood, and became the companion of a wild cat. He found it caught in a trap and released it, but its leg was broken. The cat became the devoted slave of its deliverer. They were inseparable, but whenever the cat is mentioned, attention is drawn to the fact that it "trailed a limb." If it went hunting it went "trailing a limb," and when it returned with its prey it came "trailing a limb." Always and everywhere it trailed a limb. There are many Christians like that cat. They are delivered, but they trail a limb; and the one thing that always forces itself upon the

attention is the trailing limb. All their excellencies are forgotten in the obtrusion of one glaring defect. A good man, but then comes the trailing limb of uncontrolled temper, uncharitable judgment, worldliness, covetousness, or some other unhealed infirmity of the flesh or spirit.

Now the gospel of the resurrection comes with a message of healing and power for the trailing limb. Jesus Christ trailed no limb. There was no part of His body that did not receive the fulness of energy and life, and our salvation is after the likeness of His resurrection. His life-giving power does not stop short at each man's trailing limb. He brings to the soul the gift of abundant life. He saves to the uttermost. When He healed the sick He made them whole. When He gave a man sight He did not send him to buy spectacles. The maimed He healed had no further use for crutches. Are there conditions in the spiritual sphere that baffle His power and leave His work imperfect? Is the power which raised Christ from the dead inadequate to restore a trailing limb? Nay, He is able to deliver out of the hands of all our enemies, and His blood cleanses from all sin. He saves men by a new creation, and not only checks the virus in the blood, but cleanses it. The supreme miracle is the warrant of a complete, present,

and eternal deliverance from all sin. The limb that has been trailed for a life-time need not be trailed another hour. Here and now the exceeding greatness of the power demonstrated in the resurrection of Christ may be realised in the complete deliverance of the soul from every trace of bondage and death. The power of His resurrection secures a full salvation, sustained continually in the strength of His might. So that, being raised with Him, we walk with Him in newness of life.

III. THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

THIS RESURRECTION POWER IS THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE EFFICIENT CAUSE IN ALL CHRISTIAN SERVICE. “Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” *Acts i. 8* The Spirit of Pentecost is the Spirit of power. The power of Easter has become the abiding power of Pentecost. The work of salvation in the world is not of man, but of God. It is not in the energy of man’s power but in the demonstration of the Spirit that men are saved. It is the Spirit of *revival* that brings dead souls to life. In the power of the resurrection lies the only solution of all our problems. If we cannot raise the dead, if we cannot secure the spiritual counterpart of Christ’s resurrection, our work is vain. Conversion is the foundation miracle and the crowning seal of God in His Church. If men

are raised from the dead, every other condition of success is secured ; if men are not raised, our manifold activities are an empty show.

It is many years since I was first confronted with the problem of bringing the outsider to the house of God. I was inexperienced, and having no idea of the magnitude and complexity of the task, not destitute of confidence in my own resources. My sermons were prepared with the utmost care, and my energies were given without stint to every form of religious and social activity. Still, nothing was accomplished either within the Church or without. The members were stolid and the outsider indifferent. I grew desperate. My resources failed, and I was driven back upon God. A few kindred souls leagued themselves in a covenant of prayer for a revival of God's work and the salvation of men. God led me by a way that I knew not. The first answer to that prayer was a revelation of my own heart which led to a crisis and a baptism. This gave me a new Bible, and through it there came a revelation of the Divine method of Christian service. The Spirit of power came upon a united and praying people. A call to united prayer was sounded ; in a marvellous way old sores were healed and breaches repaired. The Spirit of the Lord fell upon His people, and the work began. For weeks the story of Christ's raising

Lazarus from the dead possessed me. It seemed to accomplish just the work we needed. It brought the people. They came to see Lazarus when they would not come to see Jesus. When they saw Lazarus, they believed on Jesus. For weeks we prayed that the Lord would send us a Lazarus—a man so dead and buried in sin, that his wickedness had become offensively notorious and hopelessly bad. With unwearying monotony we prayed the Lord to save the worst sinner in the town, and He did. The man came of his own accord and volunteered to sign the pledge. He was a dreadful character. Everybody knew him; nobody ever expected he would be any better. So far as he could remember, he had never been to a religious service except in gaol. He was the terror of the neighbourhood, and did most extraordinary things out of sheer devilry. When he had signed the pledge, we wanted to pray with him, but he said: "Not this time, one thing at once." But we prayed hard for him. A fortnight later he came to the service, and our hearts nearly stood still when we saw the big, rough fellow in his working clothes, walk down the aisle and fling himself on his knees at the communion-rail. He was gloriously saved.

Next morning he told all his workmates what had happened. Then, men who before his conversion dared not have spoken a cross word to

him persecuted him most cruelly. He stood splendidly, until one day, as they were blasting, his bar slipped and jammed his finger. Before he was aware an oath escaped him. The men laughed, but only for a moment. They released his finger, and in compassion wanted to wrap it up. The tears were on his face, but not for the pain. With a broken voice he said : "Nay, I've a bigger wound than this ; we'll have that seen to first" ; and, surrounded by the men who had heard him swear, he prayed earnestly and with great simplicity for the forgiveness of his sin. Peace came into his soul, and when he got up he said : "It's all right, mates ; God has forgiven me. Now we'll have it wrapped up."

The news of his conversion spread like wildfire. Hundreds came to Church to see the man Christ had raised from the dead. When it was announced that this man would tell the story of his conversion, they flocked from far and near to hear his testimony. We had been trying for months to fill the Church without success, but when this Lazarus stood up to speak of the things of God, it was impossible to get near the place for the crowd. They would not come to hear sermons ; they would not come to see Jesus ; but they came to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised and saved. Hundreds were converted through that one

witness. For years he has been a standing proof of God's power. He was an argument that silenced scoffers and critics. Smug hypocrites were offended, but the Church was filled and sinners were saved.

This is the power the Church needs. There is no substitute for it, and it never fails. Wherever there is a Lazarus, and the continual operation of converting power bringing men out of the death of sin to a life of righteousness and purity before God, the work of the Lord will abound. The Church languishes where there are no conversions. Nothing but the power of the resurrection can save our Churches. The substitution of secularisation and social activity is a confession of failure. Let the Churches pray souls out of their graves, if they would do the work of God. Our most urgent need is that we should know the exceeding greatness of His power in the resurrection of the dead.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION IS THE PATTERN AND PLEDGE OF OUR OWN FINAL RESURRECTION.

The ultimate demonstration of this power "will fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subject all things unto Himself." Resurrection to life is the inheritance of sons. It is sonship that supplies the scientific basis of the

Phil. iii.
21.

Rom. i. 4.

resurrection. Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." Death could not retain Him. Being who He was, "it was not possible that He should be holden of it." The spiritual body is possible only to spiritual sonship. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

*Acts ii. 24.**Rom. viii.
11.*

Power is useless unless it can be applied. God may have provided unlimited power, but unless we can bring it into operation we may as well be without it. Faith is the condition of applied power. The exceeding greatness of God's power is "to usward who believe." How miserably our attainments and achievements contrast with the possibilities set forth in this standard miracle! What weaklings and cripples we are! How ineffectual our service in grappling with the gigantic forces of evil! Iniquity is openly defiant, and scoffers mock at our vain formula of traditional power. Why are we so helpless while there are such resources of strength? There are non-conductors of power. The tiniest thing may turn its current, or cut it off. So, in the life of the soul and in the work of the Church, there are things fatal to power. Sin is fatal to power;

carnality is fatal to power ; worldliness is fatal to power ; self-seeking is fatal to power ; fear of man is fatal to power ; in a word, unbelief is fatal to power. But the heart that is surrendered, cleansed, sanctified, and possessed of God, realises the infinite resources that are ours in Christ. The man that is obedient, and claims by living faith the abiding fulness of the Eternal Spirit, the power of God is for him, and in him, and through him to the resurrection of the dead. God grant us to know “ Him and the power of His resurrection ” !

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF FAITH

“Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God ; for all things are possible with God.”—
S. Mark x. 27.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF FAITH

THE genius of New Testament teaching is in its prepositions. To ignore the significance and distinctions of such words as *in*, *with*, *for* and *through*, is to miss the essential qualities of the Christian faith. They contain the unique truths of Christianity, and set forth the most glorious realities of the soul's experience in Christ. The core of the Gospel is that Christ died for our sins, the dynamic of salvation is in the fact that He lives in us, and the ultimate certainty of the triumph of the Kingdom of God in the world is that the indwelling Christ works through redeemed and sanctified humanity by His Spirit. Christ *for* us, Christ *in* us, Christ *through* us is the ground of our hope and the assurance of our faith.

I. MAN WITH GOD.

Perhaps in no passage has a preposition been more persistently misread than in this saying of Christ, "With man it is impossible, but not with God ; for all things are possible with God." It is usually interpreted as if "with" were the

equivalent of "to." This makes the passage read as if Christ said, It is impossible to man, but not to God ; all things are possible to God. Jesus did not say "to" but "with" ; and the distinction is important. One sets forth the contrast between man's impotence and God's power. It brings to his rescue a mighty ally, but it puts no strength into him. The impossible is accomplished for him, not by him. The other links the impotent man with the omnipotent God, and makes him strong in the strength of God. The one finds him helpless and provides him a great Helper ; the other imparts power and makes man omnipotent for his task. He receives into his own soul the very energy of the Almighty, so that, strengthened with Divine might in his inner man, all things become possible to him with God. One emphasises the impotence of man ; the other shows him the way to omnipotence by which the impossible can be made possible. With man, impossible ; with God, that is, to man with God, all things are possible.

The subject under discussion is salvation. The sorrowful departure of the rich young ruler, so earnest, so eligible, so blameless, so influential, had filled the disciples with perplexity and amazement. If such as he are rejected, who then can be saved ? The Master answers that salvation

is impossible with man. All the resources of humanity at its best are inadequate for salvation ; but in salvation we are dealing not with the resources of man but of God, and all things are possible with God. The power that saves is not within the command of man ; it is of God. Apart from Him salvation is impossible to all ; but with Him, to the weakest, impossibilities are no more. Linked with Omnipotence, the strength of man is as the strength of God. In the power of God all things become possible to man.

This truth is frequently on the lips of Jesus. In the preceding chapter we have the instructive incident of the father and his demoniac child. In the absence of Jesus he brought his lad to the disciples and besought them to heal him. They had been commissioned and accustomed to cast out devils, and unconscious of any loss of power they pronounced the usual formula, and expected the usual result. But the evil spirit ignored their authority and defied their commands. Their enemies were not slow to turn their failure to account, and to expose their humiliation. When Jesus returned He found His crestfallen disciples the objects of a jeering and malicious crowd, and He at once took possession of the field. In response to His inquiry, the father stated the case with brutal frankness. Jesus commanded the lad to be brought to Him. As he was being

brought, the evil spirit threw him to the ground in violent paroxysms of agony, and he wallowed foaming. With characteristic composure Jesus asked how long he had been thus afflicted. The father answered that he had suffered from being a child, and told how he fell frequently into the fire and into the water, imperilling his life. Then with all the pent-up agony of a breaking heart, he cried : " If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us." That *if* revealed the cause of delay. The *if* was not with Christ but with the father. It was not a question of Christ's ability but of the father's faith. Not if I can do, but if thou canst believe. *All things are possible to him that believeth.* Straightway the father of the child cried out and said, " I believe ; help Thou mine unbelief." Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the lad.

When the crowd had dispersed, the disciples came privately to Jesus and asked Him for the explanation of their failure, saying, " Why could not we cast it out ? " and in St. Matthew's account we have this answer : " And He saith unto them, Because of your little faith : for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove ; AND NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE UNTO YOU."

In Mark xi. 22-24 we have the same teaching. Going up to Jerusalem from Bethany, Jesus hungered, and seeing a fig-tree in leaf, He came to gather of its fruit. The leaves of the fig-tree announce the presence of fruit, and are an invitation to come and eat. When He came to the tree He found it fruitless though full of leaves. It mocked His hunger with a lie, and He cursed it as He will ultimately curse every lie that mocks man's need. "And as they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig-tree withered away from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto Him, Rabbi, behold, the fig-tree which Thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea ; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass ; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." Language could not be more explicit. Faith imparts to man a power, that turns petition into decree.

Consistently with this teaching Christ forecasts for His disciples a life full of works which transcend all human possibility. Through faith in His Name they were to find exemption from

fatal perils, and to accomplish marvellous and miraculous things. “These signs shall follow them that believe : in My Name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents ; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.” And again : “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask Me anything in My name that will I do.” So complete is the identification of believers with Christ that His work becomes theirs, and for all the needs of that work they may command all the resources of eternal wisdom and power. To them that are with God the Lord of Hosts has said, “Concerning the work of My hands, command ye Me.” Thus the things impossible with men become possible with God. The Apostle Paul confirms this teaching out of his own experience. At the close of a long life full of peril, suffering, hardship, and heroic service, he summed up his testimony to the power of God in him in the memorable words : “I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.”

This is Christ’s teaching concerning man. He

Mark xvi.
17, 18.

S. John
xiv. 12, 13.

Isa. xlv.
11.

Phil. iv.
13.

never belittled human nature; that is the Devil's way. Neither was He under any misapprehension as to the limitation of man's possibilities apart from God. Satan tempts men to play the god with their little stock of capacity. He tempts to self-sufficiency, and then taunts with weakness. Jesus reveals the impossibilities of man's strength, and calls him to the source of infinite power. Made but a little lower than God, and God in Christ having taken hold of his nature, and lifted him above the angels, man is called into fellowship and partnership with God, and all things are made possible to him. If this teaching is anything but a mockery, it means that man with God is omnipotent.

II. THE ONLY CONDITION OF THIS FELLOWSHIP IN POWER IS FAITH.

The promise is to him that believes. To faith it is declared that nothing is impossible. Its sphere is without limit and its resources without reserve. Moving mountains and hurling them into the depths of the sea is a mere incident in its course of power. It is illimitable, irresistible, and inexhaustible. Miracles are its normal operations. The Scriptures attribute to faith the power of the Infinite. This is not true of all faith, for all faith is not all-powerful. The disciples had faith, but it was neither of the kind nor degree to cast out the evil spirit. "Because

of your little faith " is the Master's explanation of their failure. There were some who believed on His Name to whom Jesus did not trust Himself. Their trust was not to be trusted ; not that it was false, but because its strength was not such as to warrant His confidence. There are some who trust God whom God cannot trust. It is the faith that commands confidence to which all things are possible.

There are three stages of faith. There is the faith that receives, the faith that reckons, and the faith that risks. By the first we are justified. " As many as *received* Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name." By the second we are sanctified. " Even so *reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." To reckon is not to assume what is not there, but to act upon assured fact. If we died in Christ, we may reckon ourselves dead unto sin, for Christ died for sin ; and if we rose again in Him, we may reckon ourselves alive unto God in Him. Reckoning faith is sanctifying faith. By the third we are endued with the gift of power. Twice in the roll of honour among men of faith we are told that these believers had " witness borne to them." That is, there was given an open demonstration of power, that testified to their faith and vindi-

S. John ii.
23, 24.

S. John i.
12.

Rom. vi.
1.

Heb. xi.
2, 39.

cated it. God endorsed and verified their faith by mighty works. The one thing common to their faith was the element of venture. They had a vision of the unseen ; it became to them a promise and a prophecy ; they embraced and confessed it, and put it to open proof. They risked everything on God. Enoch walked with God. Noah built the ark. Abraham left his country and afterwards risked Isaac's life in which was the seed of the promise. Moses renounced his position, imperilled his life, and then risked an entire nation on the Word of the Lord.

In every age it has been the faith that risked that moved mountains, cast out devils, and healed the nations. That is where faith finds its test and its triumphs ; and alas ! that is where faith so often breaks down. We can trust God for receiving. We can trust even for sanctifying grace : but when it comes to risk ! When obedience may mean loss of position, loss of money, loss of home, how many there are that shrink back. When faith involves risk of failure, the sorrow of reproach, and the sting of ridicule, what then ? Is not the vision of faith too often abandoned with a sigh ? Faith that goes forward triumphs. Seas divide at its touch and mountains move at its word. It spreads tables in the wilderness and turns desert sands into springs of water. Under its influence the weak become

strong and the timid lose their fear. It subdues kingdoms, works righteousness, obtains promises, stops the mouths of lions, quenches the power of fire, delivers from the edge of the sword, and turns weaklings into invincible warriors, who put to flight the armies of the alien. By it men sing in the night, worship in caves, and pray in prisons. Nothing can daunt them; nothing can overcome them; nothing can resist them. Exultant, jubilant, triumphant, the men of faith are the hosts of God. He is their Leader, their Captain, their Father, and their Lord.

Faith commands God. He is pledged to its call. He has sealed the covenant with an oath. His word is as immutable as Himself. He challenges man to put Him to the proof, and the faith that ventures waxes mighty. George Müller is the most conspicuous example of venturing faith in this generation. On the strength of God's promise he took two thousand orphan children to house, clothe, and feed. He had no backing but in God. Without money, social prestige, or organisation he cast two thousand hungry children daily upon the Word of the Father; and daily, God honoured his faith and paid his bills. Never once did one of his orphans go hungry, or a child want for any good thing. Sometimes they went to bed with the larder bare and the purse empty, but the breakfast was

always on the table at the appointed hour next morning. George Müller told the Lord of his need, and the Lord kept some rich man awake till he had sent provisions for His children at the orphanage. When we hear of such miracles wrought by prayer, we sigh for a like faith in our own souls. BUT WE DO NOT TAKE THE ORPHANS. We shrink from the risk ; and while there is not faith enough to risk, there will never be faith enough to command. Jesus Christ meant what He said, "All things are possible with God." The man of faith is omnipotent. Being with God, he becomes as God.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY OMNIPOTENCE ?

The explanation of this power in man must be the same as that given to the attribute of omnipotence in God. When we say all things are possible to God, we mean all things consistent with Himself and with the nature of that on which He works. There is nothing of the magician in God. He does not work by magic, but by law. The conception of Him as a conjuror of infinite skill is a caricature. There is nothing whimsical or arbitrary in His power. He can do nothing that involves a contradiction of Himself. He cannot lie. The Judge of all the earth must do right. There is a *must* even in the Infinite. He can do nothing that violates the rights of another. Having made

man what he is, God cannot infringe a single right with which He has endowed him. He wills that all men should be saved, but He can compel no man to enter the Kingdom. Coercion is inconsistent with freedom. Even the rights of the Devil are respected.

So with man. When Jesus assures men that all things are possible through faith, because faith links man with God, He does not mean that there is given him unlimited power for capricious use. He cannot go through the world working miracles according to every whim and desire. It is not given to him that he may move mountains and work wonders at his will. Power is subject to law, and is to be exercised according to the will of God. Like Naaman, many expect to be saved by the occult operation of some mysterious power, and to see the work of the Lord done in the world by some spectacular demonstration of the supernatural. But there is nothing capricious in all H's ways. This power of God in man works wherever possible through ordinary means and by known laws. When these are not sufficient, it works by means that are not ordinary and by laws that are not known; but whether the means are ordinary or extraordinary, and the laws natural or supernatural, the power is always limited in its operation to things within the sphere

of the Divine will. That is the point always to be settled. Is it His will? If it is, then, for all the will of God, man with God is omnipotent. Apart from Him the demands of the Divine will are impossible, but "strengthened with all might according to His glorious power," all things are possible to them that believe. Which means that,

WITH GOD, ALL MAN OUGHT TO BE HE CAN BE,
and

WITH GOD, ALL MAN OUGHT TO DO HE CAN DO.

IV. THE IMPOSSIBLE DEMANDS OF THE KINGDOM.

The Kingdom makes impossible demands of all men. Turn again to the case of the young man, whose sorrowful refusal occasioned the words of the text. He was to all appearance an ideal seeker. He was rich without being lax in morality, influential yet earnest, religious but not rigid. So earnest was he, that he forgot the conventionalities of his position, and running to Jesus knelt at His feet in the open street. He was seeking Eternal Life. After questioning him about his manner of life Jesus loved him, and told him if he would be perfect and enter into that life he sought, he must go and sell all he had, give it to the poor, and follow Him. The young man regarded the conditions as impossible,

and very reluctantly went away sorrowing. As Jesus watched his retreating figure He said with a sigh, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God. And the disciples were amazed at His words." They had never been taught to regard riches as a stumbling-block to goodness. Wealth had always been regarded as an advantage to religion and a very considerable proof of it. Instead of being a disqualification, it had always secured prestige and honour; instead of shutting out, it could always be relied upon to secure welcome and distinction. Indeed, the two great features of the Kingdom present to their minds were righteousness and prosperity, and it is to be feared prosperity was the goal, and righteousness the means to the end.

No wonder they were surprised. Jesus made it appear that if riches are not inconsistent with the Kingdom, they are certainly a disadvantage and a hindrance. If we read the words without amazement, it is because we have ceased to take them seriously. How many are there who really believe that riches are inimical to goodness? Do not multitudes of professed followers of Jesus believe they would be better Christians "if they were only better off"? The plain teaching of Jesus is that "the better off" we are the more difficult shall we find the life of the

Kingdom. Jesus answered the surprise of His disciples with the statement that to enter the Kingdom for any man is no easy matter. The words, "for them that trust in riches," in verse 24 should almost certainly be omitted. What He said was : "Children, how hard is it to enter the Kingdom of God"! They gasped with astonishment, and it was in answer to their inquiry, "Then who can be saved?" that Jesus, looking upon them, said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God : for all things are possible with God."

Every man finds in his life that which corresponds to the young ruler's possessions. Face to face with Christ and seeking eternal life, the kingdoms of the world take their final stand upon some one barrier between the soul and God. The last conflict is over some possession whose roots are buried in our hearts, or some call for which we have no strength. It may be a habit, a passion, a companionship, an idol, we are called to surrender ; or it may be a duty which demands courage, a vocation that involves sacrifice, a path that means crucifixion. When the demand is made, the mind reels and the soul shrinks sorrowfully and helplessly away, saying over and over again, I cannot, I cannot ! It is impossible ! So it is ; but not with God. With Him whatever ought to be can be. All things

are possible with God. Surrender in His strength, step out at His command, and the impossible shall come to be. Do not be afraid ; He is with you. Do not argue, do not parley, do not compromise. Obey. This is among the all things possible. It can be done. Do it now. Take hold of God, and nothing shall be impossible to you.

THE KINGDOM DEMANDS THE IMPOSSIBLE IN CHARACTER AS WELL AS IN ITS CONDITIONS OF ENTRANCE.

The fig-tree that Jesus cursed is a parable. The Kingdom of Christ demands that every false and unholy thing shall be destroyed from the root. He did not come to regulate sin, but to destroy it. He does not seek to control evil, but to purge it away. Truth is required in the inward parts. Evil must be destroyed from the root. The Kingdom cannot tolerate any root of bitterness, malice, or sin. In thought, desire and motive the Christian must stand clear of sin ; in the inward and hidden parts he must be clean. Who can cleanse his heart out of which are the issues of life, so that when his very roots are laid bare he can stand before God unafraid and unashamed ? It cannot be ! cries every man who has looked into the deep places of his own soul. It is impossible ! Yes, with men it is impossible, but not with God. Even this is possible with God. At His word and by His power every false, selfish, and sinful thing shall die at the root.

If our salvation is to be the accomplishment of our own unaided powers, the task is utterly hopeless. When we look at the standard demanded and think of our own weakness, we are in despair; but when we turn our eyes to God and think of Him in all the glory of His wisdom, the manifoldness of His grace, and the greatness of His power, and remember He is with us, and working in us to will and to do His good pleasure, then faith exultant cries,—

The thing impossible shall be:
All things are possible to me.

THE IMPOSSIBLE SERVICE OF THE KINGDOM. The service of the Kingdom is as impossible without God as is its standard of consecration and holiness. The discomfited and baffled disciples are still with us. The demons still mock our formulæ and deride our attempts to dislodge them. Men stand helpless in the presence of the writhing agony of wallowing and devil-torn humanity. We are sent to deliver men from the dominion of evil, and to destroy the forces that wreck and rend human life. Who is sufficient for these things? Think of the forces devilish and human, social and personal, arrayed against those who seek the salvation of men. We are sent to save men who cannot be persuaded they are in peril; to deliver slaves who call their

captivity freedom ; to heal those who boast they have no need of a physician. The call to holiness is delivered to the sinful by nature, choice, and desire ; and the standard of righteousness is urged upon wills ensnared and enfeebled by sin. The task is hopeless. Think of the missionary in lands for millenniums wedded to idolatry. He goes a stranger with a strange religion, without prestige, without bribes, and without civic protection. His avowed intention is to destroy the religion which has been the pride and solace of their fathers for generations, and to bring them the God who died as a criminal on a gibbet. There can be no compromise. To accept the Missionary's Christ involves the rejection of every other god. The change is social as well as religious. The messenger of peace brings fire and sword. Domestic ties, social customs, and national traditions have to be abandoned that the Kingdom may be entered. What an undertaking ! We are called of God to redeem the promise to His Son that He shall have the nation for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession ; and the only weapons placed in our hands are mercy and truth. Did ever man put his hand to so impossible a task ?

Psalms ii. 8.

At home the forces of evil are scarcely less formidable. Iniquity is entrenched behind im-

pregnable barriers. Social unrighteousness is honoured and revered, if by it men increase in wealth and rise in power. Failure is the only offence men really condemn. If a man sin on a large enough scale and maintain the whip-hand, he is welcomed as a demi-god. Organised evil is buttressed by the State, patronised by the great, and condoned by the Church. Gold is a god, pleasure a passion, and religion an intolerable restraint. The follower of Christ is sent into the pandemonium of lust and passion, to quench their fires and to turn men from the delirium of insanity into the ways of virtue, sobriety, and reason. It is a battle between duty and desire, reason and pleasure, soul and flesh, man and beast, God and Devil, Heaven and Hell. Coercion is impossible ; persuasion is our only method of war.

Let those who have striven longest and tried hardest to turn men from sin say whether the task is easy. It is hopeless. We have no power to lift men to the heights of truth and goodness. Human agencies may change the form and check the indecencies of evil, but they cannot save. With man the salvation of the world is impossible. It is utterly beyond our power. **BUT WITH GOD !** Not God without men, nor men without God ! With God all things are possible. What wonders God-inspired men have wrought ! In Africa,

Fiji, India, China and the Islands of the sea, the messenger of God has conquered, prevailing against sin. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Man with God, and God with man ; that is the secret of power. The Divine in earthen vessels is the invincible method of saving grace. The indwelling Spirit is the only adequate equipment for the service of the Kingdom. It is not by human wisdom, ingenuity, and strength we prevail, but by the Spirit of the Lord. The measure of the Divine in us is the measure of our effectiveness ; and the world has yet to see what God can do with a man and by a man who is fully surrendered to His will, and endued with His Spirit. With God nothing is impossible ; but without Him how helpless and foolish we are. With God ! I with God and God with me in all the service of His will, makes the impossible possible to me. He can thresh mountains with a worm, and with Him a worm may beat the mountains small and make the hills as chaff.

Isa. xli.
14, 15.

OUR DAILY CALLING WITH GOD.

S. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, closes the discussion of a difficult subject with the exhortation :
 “Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God.” There were Christians at Corinth who found their circumstances unfavourable to holy living. One had a wife who

1 Cor. vii.
24.

was an idolater, and another was in slavery. They wrote to the Apostle asking if the believer might not leave his unchristian wife, and the slave his heathen master. The Apostle's answer was full of sagacity. If the unchristian partner was willing to stay, the Christian must not forsake her nor put her away. The slave was exhorted to prove his Christianity, not by breaking his bonds, but by proving the soul-freedom of his new life.

In settling the local difficulty he lays down the great and universal truth, that the Christian's real environment is God. He dwells in God; and dwelling there, it is a small matter what his earthly surroundings may happen to be, and as time is short, every man would do well to abide with God where the grace of God found Him. It may not be palatable counsel to modern minds, but at any rate it makes it clear that with God the divine life is not conditioned upon material comforts and prosperity. We are all apt to think our circumstances unfavourable to grace. So they are. In every earthly condition there is something hostile to spirituality. There is no calling or lot in life where the life of Heaven is possible with men apart from God; but there is no condition where it is not possible with God. Wherever God puts us we can be just there all He wants us to be. There is no need to

whine over our circumstances. Unbelief murmurs, faith triumphs. Nothing can harm the soul that abides in its lot with God. God is able to keep wherever He locates. The darker the place the greater the need for the light, and the fiercer the battle the greater the glory to be won. God's call is always to the impossible, but He blots the word out of the Christian's vocabulary by making all things possible with Him. For life and godliness, character and service, all things are possible with God.

“I CAN DO ALL THINGS IN HIM THAT STRENGTHENETH ME.”

CHRIST'S PROMISE OF THE
SPIRIT

“ And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth : whom the world cannot receive ; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him : ye know Him ; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you.”—*S. John* xiv. 16, 17.

“ These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.”—*S. John* xiv. 25, 26.

“ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth; which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me ; and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.”—*S. John* xv. 26, 27.

“ Nevertheless I tell you the truth ; it is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I go, I will send Him unto you.”—*S. John* xvi. 7.

“ But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”—*Acts* i. 8.

“ And behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you : but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.”—*S. Luke* xxiv. 49.

CHRIST'S PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

ONE of the most remarkable features of Jesus Christ's ministry is His silence concerning the Holy Spirit. The occasions when He mentions Him are exceedingly rare, and there is always in the circumstances something that made the reference necessary. To Nicodemus he declared the necessity of being "born of the Spirit" if a man would enter the Kingdom of God. Speaking of prayer He said: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" The blasphemy which attributed His ministry of healing to Satanic power wrung from Him the terrible warning against the sin for which there is no forgiveness. In addition to these there were incidental and indirect references to the Spirit, but no definite and explicit teaching concerning Him till the shadow of the Cross fell upon the Saviour's path. And yet Jesus said to His disciples on the eve of His departure, "Ye know Him, for He abideth with you." Though there had been a marked absence of direct reference to the Spirit,

S. Luke
xi. 13.

S. Matt.
xii. 24-32.

the whole life and ministry of Jesus had been one continual unfolding of the person and work of the Holy Ghost. In Him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead. He made known the Spirit just as truly as He revealed the Father. "Ye know Him" must be placed side by side with the words to Philip, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." The life they had witnessed was a manifestation of the Spirit as truly as it was a revelation of the Father.

S. John
xiv. 9.

In His parting counsels Jesus spake freely of the Spirit. In the Upper Room the most precious words of human speech fell from His lips, and among them is His promise and teaching concerning the Spirit. In a few pregnant sentences He gathers up all that can ever be said of the Spirit's relation to the Church, the World, and God. It is a final and complete statement of the doctrine of the Spirit. All that follows simply illustrates, exemplifies, and demonstrates what is here set forth. The sayings should be studied clause by clause, and word by word, for there is no profounder truth in all the word of God.

Three great truths concerning the Spirit underlie all the teaching of these sayings of Jesus.

1. The Spirit comes to take the place of Jesus, to be to the disciples all that Christ had been, and all that He would have become could He have stayed with them.

2. The Spirit here promised to the disciples is the self-same Spirit that dwelt in Christ, and was the explanation of His life and Ministry.
3. The Spirit comes to dwell in the disciple as He dwelt in Christ, that Christ may be reproduced in him, and make him to be in the world all that Christ would have been had He stayed upon the earth and lived where that disciple lives.

He comes to take the place of Christ, to be with us as He was with Christ, to make us to be as Christ in the world.

THE PARACLETE.

That the Spirit comes to take the place of Christ is evident from the Name by which the Christ speaks of Him. It is deplorable that our English version mistranslates the Greek Paraclete by the word Comforter. Jesus did not promise another Comforter, but another Paraclete. This was a new name for the Spirit of God. It had never before been applied to a Divine Agent, but it is repeated four times in our Lord's parting words, and is used with a deliberateness and emphasis that mark its importance. It is impossible to read the four passages in which the word occurs without feeling the inadequateness of "Comforter" for the office He fills. Instruction, witnessing, and conviction are not

usually associated with the ministry of consolation. The translation entirely misses the mark, and is responsible for untold mischief in both doctrine and experience; and yet it has prevailed from the days of the Fathers to the latest Version of the Scriptures. It misrepresents the Mission of the Spirit, has led believers to think less of obligation than of comfort, and has associated religion with soothing consolations rather than with conflict. The need is not comfort, but power. The call is not to pampered softness, but to the hardship of service and the strain of battle. The Holy Spirit is not given to be a nursing-mother to fretful children, but the captain of a mighty host full of nerve and fire. The chapter opens with the tenderest and divinest consolation ever spoken to sorrowing souls, but the note of consolation soon changes to an inspiring call to glorious service. The disciples found their consolation not in Pentecost, but in the glory of an Easter dawn. It was not comfort they needed, but assurance, inspiration, guidance, strength; and these are all promised in the Holy Ghost.

The marginal note of the Revised Version gives Advocate and Helper as alternative translations. Either would have been better than Comforter; but it is a pity Paraclete has not been naturalised as other untranslatable words have been. The Latin *Advocate* is the nearest approach to the

Greek *Paraclete*. An advocate is a lawyer, and while it is true that the calling of a lawyer does not cover the whole ground of the Spirit's mission, it is nearer the truth to speak of the Holy Spirit as a Lawyer than as a Comforter. The ancient advocate was more than a hired pleader linked only to his client by professional ties. He was counsellor, administrator, and representative as well as champion and vindicator. Both *Paraclete* and *Advocate* mean, "to call to one's side for help, especially against an accuser or judge." It is more than readiness to help. The person called is at the command of the one who calls. In every time of perplexity and difficulty he is the pledged counsellor and guide. Broadly speaking, that is the ideal position of a lawyer still. In a Court of Justice he stands in his client's stead, pleads his client's cause, defends his client's name. In practical matters he directs and administers his client's affairs in his name and in his place. The Holy Spirit is an Advocate. He stands in the place of Another, pleads His cause, vindicates His Name, and administers His Kingdom.

WHOSE ADVOCATE IS HE? If we were asked whose Comforter the Holy Spirit was, the immediate answer would be—Ours. The answer is not so ready when we are asked whose Advocate He is. The Spirit is Christ's Advocate, not ours. It is Christ's place He takes, Christ's cause He

pleads, Christ's name He vindicates, Christ's Kingdom He administers. Because no one term can contain the whole truth concerning the Spirit, this does not cover the whole ground of the Spirit's work. He is our Helper given to be with us in the place of Christ, but the Spirit does not plead for us but in us, and His operations in us are all in the interests of Christ's Kingdom and for the glory of Christ's Name. "He shall glorify Me" is the sum and end of His mission in the world. The Son is our Advocate with the Father in Heaven; and the Spirit is the Son's Advocate with us in the world. He is the Representative, Interpreter, and Vindicator of Jesus. To Him is committed the cause and credit of the Son of God. He is Christ's Other Self.

It is manifest, therefore, that since the Holy Spirit comes to take the place of Christ, He comes to be to the believer all that Christ was to His followers. "The Father will send you another Paraclete." He had been their Paraclete, but He was going to the Father, and another would take His place and carry on His work. If one Paraclete had not gone away, the other would not have come. He is Another, but He sustains the relationship, and continues the Mission of the One He succeeds. Whatever Christ was to us He will be, whatever Christ did for us He will do. Jesus had

been to His disciples Teacher, Witness, Revealer, Defender, and Friend, and the promise concerning the Spirit is that He shall instruct, guide, witness, reveal, and defend.

“HE SHALL BE IN YOU.”

The Holy Spirit takes the place of Christ with this difference : Christ abode *with* men, and the Spirit dwells *in* them. The change in the preposition indicates the change from one dispensation to another. The miracle of Pentecost is that it changed *with* to *in*. The Spirit is Christ in us instead of Christ with us. He not only comes to be to us all that Christ was, but to plant Himself as the Representative of Christ at the very seat and centre of our souls. As He dwelt in Christ so will He dwell in us. What He did for Christ that will He do for us. What Christ was in the world He became by the Spirit which was given to Him without measure. It was by the Spirit He was born into the world ; under the Spirit's direction He grew to manhood in favour with God and man ; the Spirit baptised Him for His ministry ; in His wisdom He taught ; by His power He wrought mighty works ; and finally, through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. The glory of Christ's work is not simply that He laid down His life for us, but that He imparts to us the very Spirit in which

and by which He lived. It is the miracle of the Incarnation duplicated, multiplied, and perpetuated in Christ's believing people. For the Son a body was prepared, but the Spirit is incarnate in the believer, and dwells in the bodies of all that believe. The Apostle Paul is very bold. He says, "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" Nothing can constitute a Temple but an indwelling Deity. The Spirit of God dwells in man, not as a figure of speech, or a holy influence, or a Divine ideal, but literally, truly, and personally He makes man's heart His home, the centre of His operations, and the seat of His power.

The most striking figure of this indwelling Divinity is found not in the New Testament, but the Old. In the story of Gideon we are told it was by the Spirit of the Lord coming upon him that he became a valiant soldier and a conquering leader of Israel. But the margin of the Revised Version reads, "The Spirit of the Lord clothed Itself with Gideon." It did not come upon him as a garment, nor fall upon him as an anointing, but finding Its way to the very centre of Gideon's being, the Spirit took possession of Gideon's faculties, and put on the man as a garment. He dwelt in the man, thinking through his brains, feeling through his soul, working with his hands. It was thus He dwelt in Christ, and in like manner

1 Cor. vi.
19.

Judges vi.
34.

He comes to be in us. He becomes the soul of the soul, and the life of the life. Disturbing no faculty, destroying no part of the personality, He dwells and works in the heart, vitalising, permeating, sanctifying, directing, empowering, and firing every part of man's being. This is consecration ; this is the secret of power for godliness and service ; this is Christianity ; to be filled, fired, and possessed of the Spirit of God. "The Spirit of Christ dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." *Rom. viii.*
9.

The trouble with many religious people is that their Christianity is outside themselves. From a dinner to the profoundest things in the world, it makes all the difference whether a thing is inside or outside a man. All things are divisible into things inside and things outside. It is the things within that live, and thrill, and sway, him. You can never get out of a man what is not in him before you start. There must be poetry in a man before you can make a poet of him, music before you can make a musician, and art before you can make an artist. Making is mis-named, for we cannot make ; the utmost that can be done is to discover and guide. What a difference between a copyist and a living soul ! Precision is not life. It is the man whose being throbs with the consciousness of an indwelling, dominating presence, that sends forth things that live. Religion above

all things is an inward reality. It is not a code of rules hung up for the guidance of life. The list of prohibitions and permissions may be strictly Biblical, authorised by tradition, and hall-marked by the Elders, but it does not make a Christian. The law of Christian living is written not on tablets and tables, but in the heart. Neither is it an ideal of character after which men are called to strive. A Christian is not a copyist. To set up even Christ as an external ideal to which you laboriously strive is pagan. It is not by imitating Christ but by receiving Him we become Christian. It is not Christ on the Cross, nor Christ in Heaven, but the living Christ in the soul in the person of His Spirit, that saves. "He shall be in you." That is the greatest word and the mightiest work of God. Sinful men the Temple of the Living God! Every believer is an Incarnation of the Holy Ghost, a medium and a messenger of the indwelling Divinity. The world is sick of imitators and echoes; it wants life, which is the life of God.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN US.

The Spirit takes up His abode in the soul to continue the ministry and work of Christ. What the Master had been to the disciples is indicated in the work outlined for the Spirit, the difference between the two being that One was with them and the Other in them.

JESUS HAD BEEN THEIR TEACHER.

They called Him Rabbi and themselves disciples. The task of instruction had been difficult and disappointing. They never understood Him, but it is to their credit that in after years they neither excused nor concealed their slowness of apprehension. Their minds were steeped in the traditions of their race, and they were constantly looking for the wrong things. They scarcely ever spoke without revealing the great gulf that lay between His ideals and their own. He held them by the charm of His personality and they followed Him, not because they understood Him, but because they loved Him. He was a constant wonder and a daily mystery to them. When He talked they listened, and went away to ask each other what He meant. They misinterpreted both His speech and His spirit. The leaven of the Pharisees they mistook for bread, and blundered almost every time they moved. Their denseness was a burden upon Him. He called them fools and slow of heart to believe, and sighed that after all His pains they still failed to understand. The things He longed to communicate He had to withhold, because they could not receive them. As we watch Him during those last days, the impression is irresistible that He laid down His work as Teacher with a sense of disappointment. They had failed to discern so much that He had hoped to make them see.

But He laid it down with a full assurance that what He had failed to accomplish Another would fulfil. He was handing them over to His own Instructor, who would dwell in them as He had dwelt in Him. "He shall teach you all things"; and so He did. Those Apostles learned more within twenty-four hours of Pentecost than they had in all the three years at the feet of Jesus. Why? Because Jesus was with them, and the Spirit was in them. Every teacher knows what a difference that makes. He tries by analogy, illustration, argument, and repetition to get truth into the intelligence, and if there be no answering mind from within, it is a hopeless task. How different when the springs of intelligence are touched from within! What a gulf there is between the things we laboriously learn by rote, and the things we know by intuition or learn under the spell of inspiration.

God's Spirit teaches from within. He does not din at the senses to find a way to the consciousness: He illumines and inspires. There is no teacher like Him. He teaches all things, brings all things to remembrance, and guides into all truth. He searches the deep things of God, and reveals them even unto babes. This Divine Teacher dwells in the soul of every true follower of Jesus. He shall be in you, and shall teach you all things. "Ye have," says S. John, "an anoint-

ing from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” “And as for you, the anointing which ye received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you.” This is the glorious charter of Christian freedom. Every man may find the Word of God within his own soul. He that wills to find the truth has God the Spirit for his teacher and guide. It is safer to seek the mind of the Spirit than the judgement of men. He is the Paraclete, Christ’s interpreter and arbiter in the soul. Bring your questions to Him, and as God is in the Heavens an honest heart shall not fail to find guidance and light ; questions about business and home, amusements and work, diet and dress. Do not make men the dividers and rulers of your life ; bring everything to God. Lay all things frankly and fully before Him, and wait for His reply. Nothing is too trivial for His attention, and nothing too complicated for His wisdom. He is given to instruct us in the truth and to interpret to our souls the mind and will of God. The Sons of God are taught and led of the Spirit.

JESUS WAS WITNESS AS WELL AS TEACHER.

Truth brings error into judgement, and that which is straight is the condemnation of all crooked things. The Servant of the Lord was sent to declare Heaven’s judgement upon the earth ; to bring Heaven’s standard of measurement to the

things of the world. He witnessed against evil and died for His testimony. The Spirit is given to witness for Christ. The world slandered Him, misjudged Him, condemned Him, crucified Him ; but He took refuge in this : " When the Paraclete is come . . . He shall bear witness of Me ; and ye also bear witness because ye have been with Me from the beginning." The Spirit vindicates the Name of Christ and bears witness in the conscience for righteousness, purity, and truth. No man need go outside his own heart if he has received the Spirit to find the sure word of prophecy concerning right and wrong. The Spirit is God's witness in the soul. The conscience bears witness in the Holy Ghost. Jesus was the Revealer of God to men, and the Spirit dwells in the soul as the Revealer of Christ. He speaks not for Himself nor from Himself, but takes of the things of Christ and declares them unto us. No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him ; and no man can say Jesus is Lord save by the Holy Ghost. He is the Custodian of all things belonging to Christ. The secrets of the Most High are with His Spirit, and He alone is privileged to reveal Jesus and show us things to come. He interprets the Word in our hand, witnesses to the path of our feet, and lifts the veil of hidden glory to the soul. Surely it was expedient for Jesus to

go away, for by His going each receives Christ to dwell in his own heart.

THE SPIRIT'S WORK THROUGH US.

He dwells in us that He may work through us. He takes the place of Christ, is within us as He was in Christ, is in the heart as Christ, and the purpose of His indwelling is the Kingdom and glory of Christ. The end of His work in us is to reproduce Christ in our lives, and by us accomplish the mission of Christ in the world. Fellowship of Spirit results in correspondence of temper, disposition, and character. If we have the Spirit of Christ, we shall be like Christ. That is the first thing the Spirit seeks to accomplish. He comes to live in us, not to shut Himself up in us a hermit-guest apart from our interests and activities. He lives in our life, expresses Himself through our powers, directs and dominates all we have and are. Yet He is not apart, but in us and of us ; the breath of our breathing, the thought of our thinking, the soul of our feeling, and the life of our living. Wherein He dwells He transforms, and the standard of His glory is Jesus Christ, so He comes to change us into the image of our Lord. He takes nothing from any man's personality, destroys no man's temperament, but He fills each and all with the spirit of Christ. In his own sphere and according to his capa-

city, every one becomes a representative of Jesus, living His life, revealing His spirit, and doing His work. A Christian is Christ's man and Christ-like.

The work of the Spirit and the work of the believer are one, and the work of both is the work of Christ. Christ came to teach, witness, reveal, and save; the Spirit comes in His place to teach, witness, reveal, and save; and the Christian inspired by the indwelling Spirit is in the world "instead of Christ" to teach, witness, reveal, and save. The Church is Christ's Body indwelt by His Spirit, and sanctified for His service. It is called to be what Christ was and is. Every place where the Church is planted ought to be conscious of the presence of a living, healing, and saving Christ in its midst. The work of the Church is to live the Christ-life, teach His word, witness to His person and His work, reveal the character of God and declare the things to come, to the saving of the world. That is our Mission: to realise Christ's purpose in the world. We are in the world "instead of Christ," called to do Christ's work. Is the Mission being fulfilled? The Spirit has not failed, though there is much over which to mourn. Notwithstanding much that is pagan, it is the Church that holds the lamp of truth, the standard of righteousness, and the vision of God. Through

the medium of His people, Christ by His Spirit is still the Teacher, Witness, and Revealer of God among men, to the salvation of the world.

THE MISSION OF ALL IS THE MISSION OF EACH. In the sphere where we live and work it ought to be as if Christ were in our place. He died for us, and we live for Him. By our life and service we have to be God's teachers, the embodiment of His righteousness, and the revealers of His love and mercy. We are Christ's epistles. His truth finds its best expositor and advocate in Christliness of temper and service. The ungodly will never know God unless we reveal Him. It is for us to so live in the Spirit that He may be able to shine through us into their souls, and He will transform us into the image of our Lord.

Every man who looks at Christ and the limitations of human life declares this life impossible of attainment. It is certainly impossible to a people destitute of the Holy Ghost. Churches that are unbelieving, worldly, ease-loving, and gold-worshipping, can never do the work of Christ. Neither can individual Christians, who resist the Spirit and covet the flesh, ever fulfil the purpose of the Holy Ghost. But no natural weakness of our own, or antagonism around us can make it impossible, for the indwelling Spirit is the power of God. If we fail, it is because we hinder the Spirit's work in our life.

A man who was present at a meeting manifestly under the influence of the Spirit was greatly moved. Speaking with a friend some days after, he said, "I was never so blessed and lifted up in soul in my life. It was like being in Heaven in that meeting. "But," he went on, "unfortunately I had to be at work at six o'clock next morning, and before eight o'clock I had come to the conclusion the preacher did not know what he was talking about, and I would like to know what he would say about living a Christlike life if he had to be in our factory at six o'clock in the morning." The preacher may have been ignorant of what a factory is like at six o'clock in the morning ; but whether factory or shop, college or home, if the Gospel of this Book does not stand the strain of a working life, it is an idle tale and an empty dream. It is the gospel of life for living men in all places and under all conditions. It is not a passing emotion, but an abiding Presence. The life is impossible to the soul that has had no Pentecost, but it is not impossible to the man strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inward man.

The last word of Jesus is, Go back ! Back to the city ; back to the place of waiting, and tarry, tarry, tarry till ye be endued with power from on high. But the world is dying ! Let it die. But men are hungry ! Let them hunger. But souls are being damned ! Let them be damned, rather

than go forth to attempt a Divine work without a Divine baptism. Go back ! Back to that Upper Room, back to your knees, back to the searching of heart and habit, thought and life ; back to pleading, praying, waiting, till the Spirit of the Lord floods the soul with light, and you are endowed with power from on high. Then go forth in the power of Pentecost, and the Christ-life shall be lived, and the works of Christ shall be done. You shall open blind eyes, cleanse foul hearts, break men's fetters, and save men's souls. In the power of the Indwelling Spirit, miracles become the commonplace of daily living.



THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT

“ And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place.

“ And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

“ And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder like as of fire ; and it sat upon each one of them.

“ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”—
Acts ii. 1-4.

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT

THE words of Jesus concerning the Spirit seem to have made but little immediate impression upon His sorrowing disciples. Probably they were too full of trouble to comprehend their meaning, and too indifferent to consolation to care to understand. Love in tears is apt to be petulant. The suggestion of any possibility of compensation for impending loss is resented as an insult and a reproach. The promise that Another should fill His place brought no comfort. They did not want Another. To speak of a successor was a reflection upon their devotion, and to say the exchange would be to their advantage could be nothing but the exaggeration of compassion. Grief for impending loss refuses to be comforted. So the promise of the Paraclete brought little light to their understanding, and apparently less comfort to their hearts. It was not until the Ascension that their eyes were opened. The Resurrection filled them with a great joy, but not until they witnessed His return to the Father did they

realise the true greatness of their Lord and the meaning of His Mission in the world. As they beheld Him rise the mists lifted from their understanding, and they returned to Jerusalem not like bereaved and broken men, but rejoicing and praising God. The vision of the opened Heavens had given them a new conception of all things in Heaven and on earth. Infinity had received a new centre, for the Eternal glory was embodied in a Person they knew; prayer had a new meaning, for it was through a Name they uttered with familiar affection; faith had received a new basis, for it was in the Christ they had loved and proved. For ten days they waited with their eyes set upon the heavens where they had seen Him disappear from their sight. With Pentecost came the fulfilment of His word, and the gift in which they found the complete realisation of all that He had said.

The Day of Pentecost was an epoch-making day. It initiated the Christian dispensation, and like all initiating days, it was a sample day. The method of the student is to track his way back to origins. Until he has reached the birth-point of his theme, his work is imperfect and his conclusions insecure. Things are seen at their origin in all the simplicity of their first intention, essentials can be studied in their completeness and order, without complication

or perversion. First days are worth seeking and repay the most careful study. In the first days is found the explanation of existence, the essential qualities of nature, and the conditions of development. The Day of Pentecost reveals every quality, every energy, and every condition of the Spirit's presence and work in the world. That one day manifests all the forces and possibilities of all succeeding days.

Experience follows the pattern of dispensations. Sinai and the Temple typified and determined the life of Judaism; Pentecost typifies and determines Christian life and experience. Every condition necessary for the coming of Pentecost as a dispensation has a corresponding condition for its coming as an individual experience. Whatever is dispensationally true is true experimentally. There is no operation of power, no privilege of the Spirit, no gift for service, that is not available for the experience of those to whom the Day is the beginning of days. The study of the broader aspects of the question reveals the individual relationship. Within the Day of Pentecost each may find the conditions of his own baptism, the possibilities of his own Christian life, and the gifts of power for his own particular work. Dispensational and experimental truth are mutually conditioned. The blessings of the

dispensation cannot be obtained apart from mental, moral, and spiritual conditions, which correspond to the essential qualities of the Dispensation. With these facts in view let us consider concerning the Spirit :—

- I. THE PREPARATION FOR HIS COMING.
- II. THE OCCASION OF HIS COMING.
- III. THE RESULTS OF HIS COMING.

I

There was an extended and an immediate preparation. The world had been preparing for Pentecost from the days of Paradise. All the movement of the Old Testament was a march towards Pentecost. The moral and ceremonial order were the tutors and governors preparing for the larger inheritance of the Spirit. Every new development of truth, and every progress in righteousness was another stage in the direction of the Day of the Spirit of God. The History of Israel and of the race is the story of the extended preparation for the fulness of time. The immediate preparation was in the work of Christ: His Death, Resurrection, and Exaltation.

“Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He

that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive."

This passage tells us the source, course, and condition of the Spirit. The Living Water is from Christ, flows through the believer, and is conditioned on the glorification of Jesus.

The Scriptures will be searched in vain for Christ's quotation. There is no passage that even approaches to it. The explanation is found in the method of quotation. The Scriptures were rarely quoted verbatim by Jesus and the Apostles. They almost invariably gave the sense rather than the letter. In this saying, Jesus stated the teaching of the Scriptures as symbolised at the feast which occasioned their utterance. The feast was the Feast of Tabernacles and the last day was the eighth day of the feast. On the seven preceding days water had been brought in a golden urn from the pool of Siloam, and poured upon the Altar amid the sounding of trumpets and other demonstrations of joy. On the eighth day there were processions and rejoicings, but no water was brought, for that day celebrated the entrance of Israel into the Land of Promise. It was on the day when the priests brought no water that Jesus stood where for seven days it had been poured

out, and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water." The meaning of the cry is in the significance of the rite. Jesus declared Himself to be the fulfilment of its prophecy, and the reality of which it was the type. The smitten rock, the stream in the wilderness, and the river of prophetic vision were all included in the celebration, and Jesus identified them all with Himself and His Mission.

That the Living Water refers to the Spirit is obvious. The first reference to this river is in the Prophet Joel whose words were quoted on the Day of Pentecost: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that . . . a fountain shall come forth of the House of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim." "That day," is the day of the out-poured Spirit, and the stream of His influence shall flow from the House of the Lord, and water all the land of Israel even to its uttermost borders. Ezekiel's vision of the River is an elaboration of Joel's prophecy. The most significant contributions he makes are, that the River comes not only from the House of the Lord but from under the Altar, and that the peculiarity of the River is its life-giving power. Wherever it flows it brings life. "Everything

Joel iii.
18.

Ezek. xlvii.

shall live whithersoever the river cometh." It is the River of God carrying in itself the gift of life ; and the life-giving stream flows from under the Altar—the place of death.

Zechariah completes the prophecy of Joel and Ezekiel. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the House of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin, and for uncleanness." That is Joel's fountain opened for the cleansing of sin as well as for the restoration of Israel. The ultimate cause is reached at last. Sin is the explanation of death. Life springs from the fountain where sin is cleansed. The cleansing and life-giving water flows east and west from the fountain, and continues its course through summer and winter till it covers the world, and the Lord shall be King over all the earth. Summers cannot dry it and winters cannot freeze it. East and west shall it flow continually till the world shall be encircled in its cleansing, quickening power.

The Book closes with a vision of the River. On the last page you find the River flowing clear as crystal through the streets of the City of God. It comes not from under an altar but a throne ; but it is the throne of God and of the Lamb. Zechariah foresaw the day when the controversy between throne and altar would be ended. The throne has become an altar, and the altar the

Zech. xiv.
8, 9.

Zech. xiv.
9.

Rev. xxii
1.

Zech. vi.
13.

true throne of power. It governs by sacrifice, and from the union of mercy and righteousness comes the River of God. Its course is through the streets of the City, cleansing, sanctifying, nourishing, and blessing the common life of man.

This is the River with which Christ identified Himself on the great day of the Feast. By a picturesque and ever-growing symbolism, the prophets had declared a Day of the Lord, when there should come forth from God that which would cleanse and save the world, destroying its death, healing its woes, and satisfying its hunger. The priest had dramatised the prophet, and in impressive ritual perpetuated his vision. The Day is at hand. Christ declares Himself to be the Temple, and from the place of His death shall come the River of God. But the hour is not yet, for His work is not yet accomplished. The Spirit can only come from the Altar, and the Sacrifice is not yet offered. Until the Father has put His seal upon the work of the Altar, and raised the suffering One to His throne, the Spirit cannot come. The descent of the Spirit waits for the Ascension of the Son. Without Calvary there can be no Pentecost; without the opened fountain, no living Stream. Not till Christ was glorified could the Spirit be given. The preparation was complete when Christ was enthroned.

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT INVOLVED THE PREPARATION OF A PEOPLE TO RECEIVE HIM. Here again there was an extended and an immediate preparation. The extended preparation of the disciples covered the whole course of Christ's ministry and fellowship. Without knowing it, they had come to know the Spirit in Christ. Everything in the life, teaching, and work of Jesus was a manifestation of the power and method of the Spirit. As the end approached, He prepared their minds for His coming by definite instruction and promise. He talked with a glow and enthusiasm of the Spirit that were calculated to kindle their desire and expectation. They were told of His wisdom and power, and the wonders He would do for them exceeding all they had seen in their Lord. Faith cometh by hearing. After the Resurrection they seem to have heard of little else but the wonders of the Coming One. The last words of the ascending Lord were words of promise concerning Him. He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father . . . "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you." If they had not heard they would not have expected, and could not have received.

Acts i.
5, 8.

The final stage of their preparation was in

united and believing prayer. The baptism came only to the prepared. It is sometimes assumed that all the disciples were filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, but we have no warrant for any such conclusion. He came upon all who were waiting for His coming. The one hundred and twenty in the Upper Room were all filled, but there were more than five hundred disciples who were privileged to see the Risen Lord. Where were the three hundred and eighty? Probably about their business attending to the common round of life. The Holy Ghost has always had to work with minorities. A small group of despised people looked for the consolation of Israel in the Coming of the Christ, and it was a minority that at the end of ten days were found waiting for the Holy Ghost. For ten consecutive days they remained in prayer. They were of one accord and in one place. A common object drew them together, a common expectation focussed their faith, and focussed faith always prevails. The fact that they continued for ten days proves both their earnestness and their faith. They waited earnestly for God, pleaded the promise of Christ, and had faith in His word.

These then are the conditions of Pentecost; the glorification of Jesus, the knowledge of the Spirit, and the prayer of faith. These con-

ditions always precede Pentecost and always secure it. The Spirit dwells where Christ rules. As the Father had to exalt Jesus to the throne before the Spirit could be given, so have we to crown Christ King of our life, before we can receive His Spirit. Where Christ is dishonoured and despised there can be no Baptism. God has made Him both Lord and Christ, and when we follow the Father's example, and make Him Lord and Christ over our own life, the first condition of Pentecost is fulfilled. If a man wants the Spirit to fill his soul, here is the way to possession in a nut-shell : crown and glorify Christ. The Spirit's work still begins at the Altar. No sacrifice, no baptism ; no Calvary, no Pentecost. It is useless to pray for the fire if the altar be not prepared. We wait in vain so long as consecration is incomplete, and there is controversy between the altar and the throne. Consecration is the simple recognition of the lordship of Jesus. In that recognition is the glorification of Jesus, for which the Spirit waits.

A few years ago a Christian man was told by his doctor that he had heart-disease and might die any day. It was a great surprise to him, but they sat and talked quietly. Then the man asked if he should give up his business. "No!" said the doctor, "I think you will die sooner if you do ; just go on, but live with this knowledge

that you may be wanted to leave this life at any moment." The man went down to business, and calling together the heads of departments he said to them : " I have been to see the doctor this morning and he tells me I have heart-disease, and that I may die at any moment and at any place. I shall still come to business, but Jesus may come at any hour to take me to Himself. And, men, understand please, that this business is to be conducted in the hourly expectation that Jesus Christ is coming to fetch the master. God bless you ! " That is consecration. That is crowning Christ. That is the normal attitude of men who watch for their Lord. That is the glorification for which the Spirit of God waits. The rest will follow. The life thus yielded will be led to the knowledge of His will, and will wait in earnest and believing prayer for the coming of power.

II

Signs are temporary ; the truths they signify are eternal. The form in which the Spirit comes is indicative of the work He comes to do. When he came upon Christ He came as a dove, but when He comes to the disciples it is as wind and fire. In Christ there was no darkness to illumine, no sin to purge, no chaff to winnow ; but when He comes to us it is for a great work

of purification, sanctification, and transformation. The elect symbol of the Spirit is fire. It is the chosen sign of the Divine Presence, from the flaming sword at Paradise to the tongues of flame at Pentecost. Every new epoch is initiated by fire. In the wilderness the Lord went before His people in a pillar of fire. At the dedication of the Tabernacle the fire of God consumed the sacrifice, and filled the Sanctuary with glory. The Shechinah light burned continually in the Temple. John's great note in calling men to repentance was a fiery baptism, and the Saviour declares He came to bring fire upon the earth.

What is meant by fire? The figure is woven into our daily speech. We speak of things that are warm, natures that are ardent, enthusiasm that glows and kindles, and passion that burns. Its opposite is used to express unwelcome and repulsive things. We complain of coolness, icy reserve, and the manner that is cold. Fire stands for enthusiasm, rapture, and passion. The Holy Ghost is fire. He kindles men. The heart in which He dwells, burns. Others have multiplied rules and regulations for respectability and righteousness, but the Spirit sets men ablaze for goodness, and makes them ardent in all the will of God. Christianity is fire. The Church filled with the Holy Ghost is a community of

men on fire. A cold Church is a corpse. A Christian is a man ablaze. "For a Christian to be cold is sin." Fire purifies, impassions, transforms. It makes all things glow with its presence and transforms into its own likeness everything it does not destroy. There are diversities of manifestation. Fire in different materials shows its presence in different ways, but the end is always either transformation or destruction. The Spirit-filled man glows, radiates, and burns with the fire of God.

At Pentecost the fire took shape, and sat upon each of them a cloven tongue of flame. The sign of Christianity is not a cross but a tongue of fire. The fire is given for speech. The Spirit is given for utterance, and for power to witness. What a difference fire makes to speech! When a man speaks as the Spirit gives him utterance he always has the word that is appropriate, apt, and effective; the word that expresses the meaning carries conviction, and captures the consent of the will. Spirit-inspired speech is always accompanied by the demonstration of power. The soul on fire talks to purpose. That tongue of fire sat on each of them without exception and without exemption. Tongues are given for speech. We also are Christ's witnesses without exception and without exemption. God expects us to speak and has provided an organ of

effective, speech. Wherever and whenever He wants our witness, the Spirit is ready to give the right word, and to clothe it with power. Fire is mightier than learning. A soul ablaze is a better guide to effective speech than much scholarship. It is fire that conquers the heart. The fire still falls from Heaven. It cannot be kindled with earthly forces. It is not of the earth but from God. We cannot kindle it. He must send it. Strange fires soon die out. There is no need to warm ourselves at other men's fires for the Spirit fell upon all, and remained with each. Lay the sacrifice upon the Altar, and then, with the soul looking to God, seek in earnest prayer and persistent faith the promise of the Father, the baptism of Fire.

III

WHAT WERE THE IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF HIS COMING ?

The greatest miracle of that day was the transformation wrought in those waiting disciples. Their fire-baptism transfigured them. It seems incredible they could be the same men with whom we are acquainted in the Gospels. Every part of their nature was vitalised, invigorated, and transformed in fire. Its effect upon their knowledge was all that Christ had promised it should be. Their eyes were opened, their memories quickened, and

their minds inspired. How clear all things appeared now that the Spirit shone upon them ! The Cross, the Resurrection, and the Kingdom were all seen in their true meaning. Peter's address reveals an illumined intelligence, an apt and accurate interpreter, an Apostle on fire. The coming of the Spirit had turned the fisherman into a teacher, orator, and evangelist. The tongue of fire gave forth the word of wisdom and of power. As men listened they found their minds informed, their reasons convinced, their souls convicted, and their wills persuaded. The gift of knowledge was accompanied with the gift of power. Without Pentecost, the story of the Gospel would have been classed with the mythologies of the world. Historical facts, however clearly proved, could not have prevailed over the prejudice and ferocity with which Christianity was assailed. The facts without the power of the Spirit secured no triumphs. All the wonders of Calvary and the Resurrection were fully assured from Easter to Pentecost ; moreover, Christ was with them. But those seven weeks made no converts. Facts alone, however miraculous, however clearly proved, have no converting and regenerating power. Pentecost set the facts on fire, and sent into the streets of Jerusalem one hundred and twenty duplicates of the Resurrection of

Christ. Each was a living witness, not only testifying to facts, but revealing and demonstrating them in his own person. Every witness was himself a proof of the Resurrection.

Contrast Pentecost with the scene at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration. It seems impossible that they can be the same men. Who could have thought that the cringing and helpless men, who stood powerless in the presence of a devil who dwelt in a lad little more than a child, could ever have become the men of Pentecost? It was the coming of the Spirit that transformed them.

In the American Civil War Sheridan's army was attacked in his absence. The camp was routed. Men threw down their arms and fled like scared sheep. Suddenly they stopped, formed, turned, and drove back their foes, and captured their artillery. What had happened to turn frightened sheep into conquering warriors, and a disgraceful rout into a glorious victory? General Sheridan had suddenly ridden into their midst, and, immediately, his conquering personality passed into the men and they were changed. At Pentecost Christ came to His own in the person of His Spirit, and there passed into their souls the mysterious presence of His Divine Personality. It is the miracle of the Indwelling Divinity that sent forth

these fire-crowned men, God-inspired, God-empowered, God-possessed. Spirit-taught and Spirit-filled they knew all things and were full of power.

The effect upon their courage was amazing. This very Peter had turned coward and liar at the laughing taunt of a servant-maid. At the first contact with peril they all forsook their Master and fled. Even after the Resurrection they sat with bolted doors for fear of the Jews, startled at every footstep and frightened at shadows. Pentecost turned these men into heroes utterly destitute of fear. Instead of hiding in terror they stepped out into the open, and boldly declared Jesus the crucified to be the Son of God, the Messiah of whom the prophets spoke, and the Saviour of the world. Without flinching they openly charged home His murder upon the rulers, of whom but a few days before they had sat in terror. Their courage was the daring of a Divine consciousness, and the fearlessness of a mighty faith. The Holy Spirit fills men with boldness. He comes to quaking, trembling, nervous men, and fires them with a passion that knows no fear.

The rebound from their terror and grief was an excited and rapturous demonstration of joy. They were so hilarious, that people said they were drunk. The consciousness of power, the sense of relief, the ludicrousness of their

fears, and the tingling, thrilling, glowing sense of fire in everypart of their being intoxicated them, and made them seem beside themselves with delight. They were drunk, but not with wine.

WHAT WAS THE EFFECT OF PENTECOST IN THE WORLD ?

It gathered crowds who were astonished, amazed, and perplexed with the things they saw and heard. Some mocked and attributed it to drink as they had attributed the Master's works to the Devil, but others were convinced, awakened, saved, and added to the Church of the Living God. That is the sample day of the Church of Christ. Wherever there is a community of Christians baptised with the Spirit of Fire, they leave the Upper Room and go out proclaiming the Gospel to the people. Fire may always be relied upon to bring a crowd. It attracts all kinds of people. They come from every quarter speaking every dialect of human speech. Sensational methods and startling advertisement are unnecessary to announce a fire ; it announces itself. When the crowd gathered, the Apostles preached. The Apostolic sermon is a sample sermon. Every man heard it in his own dialect. Its message was new but it was in a language he could understand. The Preacher appealed to the Scriptures, explained immediate events by ancient prophecy, and interpreted prophecy by history ; he pro-

claimed the Gospel and witnessed to the truth out of his own experience; he charged the conscience, urged repentance, and pleaded the promise. That is preaching. Men were pricked in their hearts and sought the way of life. Promptly they were led to Jesus and the same day were added to His Church. That is Pentecost. "And He when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." That is the Mission and work of the Holy Ghost in the world.

DID YE RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST WHEN YE BELIEVED ?

Every man knows on which side of Pentecost he lives and works. The life that is destitute of fire and power is still without its baptism. To those who would receive the fulness of the Spirit the way is plain. The Spirit can be given only where Christ is glorified. He must be exalted and enthroned, for it is from the throne of God and of the Lamb that the Spirit comes. The word of promise must be received in faith, and sought in believing prayer. Lay the sacrifice upon the Altar and wait for God. The fire of God's presence descends upon every prepared heart. "He shall be in you" filling the soul with His life and working the works of God in His strength, and out of the Spirit-filled soul shall flow streams of quickening, sanctifying, saving power.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

“Be filled with the Spirit.”—*Eph.* v. 18.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

THE Spirit dwells in the believer and the believer lives in the Spirit. The Spirit finds in the believer His home, medium, and means ; and the believer finds in the Spirit his sphere and element. “ Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.” *Rom. viii. 9.* The Spirit is the element in which the soul lives and moves and has its being. Element must be mutual. The element of man’s natural life is the atmosphere, and in order to live the man must be in the atmosphere, and the atmosphere in the man. The element of spiritual life is the Spirit, and the man must be in the Spirit, and the Spirit in the man. Element is greater, wider, and larger than the creatures that live in it ; essential to them but independent of them ; inexhaustible and indivisible, the whole is at the disposal of each. We depend upon the atmosphere for our life, but we cannot divide it, monopolise it, or exhaust it. Every thing that breathes has all the supply of the heavens at its disposal. If there is any shortage, it is because we have set some hindrance to

that which surrounds and presses upon all. So it is with the Spirit. He fills the earth, fills the soul, and we live in Him. All the resources that are in Him are for the supply of each. The command to be filled with His presence implies the possibility of so opening the avenues of our life that He may fill every part of our being.

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT.

Every need of Spiritual life and Christian service is supplied in the fulness of the Spirit. Christian experience is the work of the Spirit; begun, nourished, developed, consummated, and glorified by Him. Christianity is the dispensation of the Spirit; holiness is the fruit of His indwelling; preaching is His message spoken in the demonstration of His power; and all Christian work depends for its efficiency and effectiveness upon His presence and energy. He is the executive of the God-head, in whom resides the fulness and sufficiency of the Kingdom of God. In Him is the supply of every need, the solution of every problem, and the strength for every conflict. Defect and defeat find their explanation in the absence of His power.

Whatever the reason, there are many Christians who do not live in the fulness of the Spirit. There can be no doubt of their sincerity. They have received the Spirit for without Him no man can

be Christ's, but they are not filled with the Spirit. Their lives are not conspicuous for spirituality and power, but are characterised by defeat, dissatisfaction, and unrest. Their experience lacks vitality and vigour, their progress is disappointing, and their service without enthusiasm. Faith is unsteady, and love intermittent. The yearnings after holiness are hindered by the lusts of the flesh. There is war in the members, and often the consciousness of failure and upbraidings of conscience. The soul braces itself repeatedly for new endeavour and strains after its ideal, but there is no sense of fulness and none of the ease of power. They live, but not with an abundant overflowing life.

The seventh chapter of Romans seems to mark some such stage between the blessings that accompany justification and the Spirit-filled life of the following chapters. Although salvation is potentially complete in regeneration, it is only gradually realised in experience. The lack of fulness may be due to lack of knowledge or of faith, but it is frequently the result of disobedience, and failure to follow the light. To be filled with the Spirit is every believer's birthright, but there are many Esaus. Fleshly desires hinder the work of the Spirit, and the inheritance is bartered for the things of earth.

Roots of bitterness which defile are allowed to

spring up in the heart, and while these remain there can be no experience of the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. An inheritance is an obligation. The command to be filled with the Spirit is as imperative as that to abstain from being drunk with wine. Without it the demands of the Christian life cannot be met. There is no safety, efficiency, or satisfaction in anything less than being filled with the Spirit of God.

William Arthur in *The Tongue of Fire*, describing the effects of fulness, says, "A piece of iron is dark and cold ; imbued with a degree of heat, it becomes almost burning, without any change of appearance ; imbued with a still greater degree, its very appearance changes to that of solid fire, and it sets fire to whatever it touches. A piece of water without heat is solid and brittle ; gently warmed, it flows ; further heated, it mounts to the sky. An organ filled with the ordinary degree of air which exists everywhere is dumb ; the touch of the player can elicit but a clicking of the keys. Throw in not other air, but an unsteady current of the same air, and sweet, but imperfect and uncertain notes immediately respond to the player's touch ; increase the current to a full supply, and every pipe swells with music. Such is the Soul without the Holy Ghost ; and such are the changes which pass upon it when it receives the Holy Ghost, and when it is filled with the Spirit. In the latter

state only is it fully imbued with the Divine nature, bearing in all its manifestations some plain resemblance to its God, conveying to all on whom it acts some impression of Him, mounting heavenward in all its movements, and harmoniously pouring forth, from all its faculties, the praises of the Lord."

The command to be filled with the Spirit is given to the Ephesians who had already received the Baptism. The fulness of the Spirit having been once received, there is a new filling for every new demand. For every new call to service there is a specific preparation and equipment. Every new temptation and trial of our faith is met with a new and enlarged gift of the Holy Ghost. Increased demand brings increased supply, and enlarged capacity is met with a larger fulness. The soul's powers are possessed as they develop, and the demands are met as they arise. The need is to be full; and since we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit, the responsibility for the fulness is with man and not with God. The Spirit fills all we open to His presence and consecrate to His indwelling.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SUPREME EXAMPLE OF THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE.

To Him the Spirit was given without measure. His life was lived in abiding surrender to the will of the Spirit. Never was consecration so com-

plete or obedience so absolute. He is the ideal and pattern of the life made possible to all by the coming of the Spirit. We may never attain His perfection, but we do receive from Him His own quality of life. Our life in Christ is Christ's life in us. This oneness of life brings correspondence in experience. As He is, so are we. Whatever is characteristic of His life in the Spirit, we are warranted in expecting will be manifest in our own. The leading features of the Spirit's work in Him are marked by special mention of the Spirit as directly connected with them, and in the study of them we may find the distinctive marks of the Spirit-filled life.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE IS A LIFE OF CONQUEST OVER TEMPTATION.

The three Gospels which record the temptation of Jesus emphasise its connexion with His baptism. S. Matthew says, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." S. Mark says, "And straightway the Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and He was with the wild beasts." S. Luke says, "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days, being tempted of the devil." The temptation of the

S. Matt.
iv. 1.

S. Mark i.
12, 13.

S. Luke
v. 1.

Christ followed His baptism not only in the order of time, but in the order of consequence.

His baptism furnished the opportunity and the basis of the temptation. The order is inevitable and universal. Being full of the Spirit does not bring immunity from temptation but exposure to it. If Jesus was tempted like as we are, it follows we shall be tempted as He was. Every man's Pentecost is the signal for Satan to gird himself. Temptation comes to the spiritual man in its intensest and most subtle forms. The works of the flesh are manifest. There is no mistaking the sinfulness of "fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." These are not the temptations with which Satan assails men filled with the Spirit. He comes to them as an Angel of light. The newly-found consciousness furnishes the material for his evil design, and the ground of appeal is not vice but virtue, not flesh but spirit, not sin but self. The attack is secret and subjective, and at the very citadel of the soul. The subtle suggestions spring out of the new revelation. Its reality is not denied, but its outworking in practical life is questioned, and its powers challenged.

Gal. v.
19. 21

If this revelation be true, what then? What

is the relation of hunger, thirst, and the natural resources of life to this new gift of power? The world has to be faced. Life will have to be adjusted in all its bearings to the new consciousness, and the exact privileges and limitations of the Spirit's work discovered. It is in this adjustment of life that Satan finds his opportunity. He seeks to switch off the soul from the centre of power by diverting its trust and misdirecting its energies. We cannot stay either at the Jordan or in the Upper Room. Their very gifts drive us forth to face life's problems and fulfil its duties. In the wilderness and the street we have to discover the true order of the material and the spiritual, and until we face that problem we never know how subtle and terrible temptation can be.

The exposure to temptation is the deliberate act of the Spirit. God does not keep His saints in cotton wool. The Spirit thrust forth the Christ to His testing. Satan tempts to seduce, God tests that He may prove, and He uses Satan for our testing. In the temptation of Job God seems to retire from the scene of conflict, but the Spirit was with Jesus through all the forty days. He led Him in and led Him through. The presence of the Spirit is manifest in the discernment of the evil in the devil's appeals, in the answers that met the assault, and in the power of resistance. The proposals looked innocent, devout, and

reasonable enough, but the Spirit laid bare the bait and supplied the answers. The Spirit that exposed Him secured His complete and abundant triumph.

The first temptation in the Spirit-filled life is the temptation of bread. The spiritual life has to be lived in a bodily tenement and a material world. Though we enter a spiritual element we cannot dispense with material conditions. However full a man may be of the Spirit he still needs bread. All the needs of the natural life are represented by bread. What are the true demands and possibilities of the natural and supernatural in the spiritual life? What is its relation to the natural demands of the flesh, the problem of bread, and the obligations of common toil? Is the body to be starved in the interests of the spirit, or is it to find a freer indulgence through the new gift of power? Is it to be denied in rigorous asceticism, and disciplined by strenuous toil, or to be indulged with bread secured without labour? Is the logical issue of being filled with the Spirit a life of spare diet lived in the desert, or a life without restraint in the ordinary ways of the world? These are the questions the spiritual man is called upon to answer in the solitude of his own soul.

The temptation is to use the gift of God for self-gratification. Satan urges the use of the

power for selfish ends ; to make it a means of getting bread. The Holy Spirit scrutinises motives. For what have we sought the gift of the Spirit ? Even when we have sought it with the purest intention, the possession of the gift brings the temptation to seek in it our own gratification and satisfaction.

Self cries out against crucifixion and pleads the new gift for itself. If a Son of God, why hunger ? The flesh asserts its claim to first consideration. It demands its need shall be made a first charge in all the work and will of God. Before the called of God go forth, its claims must be heard. What about bread, bread, bread ?

The second temptation deals at the root with the same question as the first. It is still self, only at the other extreme. The temptation comes in the discrimination between courageous faith and reckless presumption. The first appeal was to give self the first care, the second to give it no care at all. If this baptism is a reality and supernatural power dwells within the person of the Spirit, then live a supernatural life, ignore natural limitations and ordinary precautions, trust and dare ! To be filled with the Spirit brings to some the temptation to vain-glory in the wonder and applause of men at the greatness of their faith. It turns them into cranks and fanatics. They glory in the parade of power. To make occasions

for the parade of faith is sin. Natural means are of God, and no man honours God by leaping from a pinnacle when there are steps.

The third temptation is also a question of adjustment. The baptism of the Spirit is a call to service. The Spirit is given for ministering, and to the Spirit-called and Spirit-filled worker there comes the problem of the relative positions of the human and the divine, the natural and the spiritual, in the work of God. In his zeal there is urged upon him the use of carnal weapons for spiritual ends. The devil can always suggest short cuts by which the world may be won and the Cross escaped. "All these," for a mere bend of the knee. Is it not the motive that gives the moral quality to an act? What harm can come of an outward conformity for so good an end? Thus the very fire of the Spirit's zeal for the kingdom leads men to listen to the suggestions of the tempter, and having begun in the Spirit they end in the flesh.

The Spirit-filled are tempted, but in the Spirit they prevail. Their attitude in temptation is marked by discernment, antipathy, antagonism, and authority. They are taught of the Spirit by whom they are led. Filled with Christ's Spirit they abhor sin and hate the devil, and hate him most when he comes in the guise of sanctity and holy zeal. Baptized into the Saviour's

spirit they seek the destruction of the devil and all his works ; knowing that their Lord has spoiled principalities and powers, they command with authority the enemy of their souls. No more shaking and fear ; no more humiliation and defeat ; the Spirit-filled are more than conquerors through the indwelling might of God. They prevail in the secret places of the soul and are kept from sins of the spirit and the mind. The imagination is cleansed, desire purified, and every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The fulness of the Spirit brings decisive, abiding, and abounding conquest over temptation. Our defence is the all-pervading fire of the Divine presence.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE IS A LIFE OF SERVICE.

“ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee : and a fame went out concerning Him through all the region round about. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all, and He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up.”

The baptism of the Spirit is a call and equipment for service. It is still necessary to emphasise the elementary truth that we are saved to serve. Many Christians are but half-pagans. They have a pagan conception of God, a pagan idea of religion, and they live a pagan life labelled with Christian names. To some, religion is a

luxury. Worship must be smooth, soft and soothing, that their senses may be lulled and gratified. Truth must excite the intellect, and Church organisation yield to their whims and flatter their vanity. To others, religion is a *penance*. It is a system of self-mortification for the good of the soul. They fill up their programme with self-imposed crosses, denying themselves all pleasant things, and forcing themselves to do disagreeable things that their own righteousness may be established. To many, religion is an *investment* seeking a return with interest in this life or the next. Christianity is not for self-indulgence, not for self-mortification, not for self-interest, but for service. Everything in the work of the Spirit is preparatory and subservient to the ministry of the kingdom of Christ.

The preparation, the call, and the equipment for Christian service is of the Holy Ghost. Experience is the University in which He prepares His workers, the vision of the open heavens is His call, and the fulness of His coming is the equipment. The new religion of humanity declares these unnecessary for service, but its goal is not the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of man. For the service of God, man needs both the Divine vision and the gift of power; and the only adequate service of man is in the service of God. Apart from Him there can be no accurate gauge

of man's need, nor adequate resources for their supply. There can be no salvation of man but in the power of the Spirit of God.

This is His work. The distribution of gifts, the appointment for service, and the enduement of power are all with Him. His operations are not always attended with startling results. He does not work apart from nature's provision, but He possesses and vitalises every natural gift. It is the power of God working in each for some particular service. Sometimes there seem to be great gaps between vision and sphere, gifts and opportunity, but there is no caprice and nothing arbitrary in the method of the Spirit. The coming of the Spirit of Power will not make all apostles, nor all evangelists. It will not secure for all the same manifest results, but it will fill each to the full limit of his powers ; it will quicken, sanctify, and strengthen every faculty to the utmost of its capacity, and it will make every one efficient and effective in the work to which he is called in the will of God. The Spirit-filled have illumination, inspiration, and force. The Spirit instructs in all details of policy and method, inspires the right word in public utterance and private speech, and invests the worker with the gift of power. Men may not receive him, but they cannot ignore Him. They may not be converted, but if not, they will make haste to thrust Him beyond their border.

This is our one great need. In no age has the Christian Church been so equipped on the human side as now. The material and mental resources for effective service were never so great. We have great wealth, magnificent buildings, and splendid appliances. The Churches never had such scholarship, culture, and social influence. All these are channels of great opportunity for the salvation of the world, but there is no flood. The magnificent channels carry but a dribbling stream instead of rivers. Our need is not more Churches and better appliances, but a universal baptism of the Spirit of God. Material prosperity and intellectual pride are our greatest peril. When we increase in riches and social influence we are in danger of substituting them for the simple and primal elements of power, and then we find it easy to raise anything but men.

The prayer-meeting becomes impossible, the social revives, but the spiritual dies and conversions cease. The river dries up because there is no rain in the land. What a difference a flood-tide of the Spirit would make in our Churches! Spirit-filled men in the pulpit: Spirit-filled singers in the choir: Spirit-filled men at the door and in the aisles: Spirit-filled men in the official meetings: Spirit-filled men at the prayer-meeting: Spirit-filled men seeking the lost in street and shop, home and by-way! We

lack nothing for service but the real Christianity which is the reign of Jesus in the fulness of the Spirit.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE IS FULL OF JOY.

“Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.” “Be not drunken with wine wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit: speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.”

“The fruit of the Spirit is joy.” He floods the soul with light and gladness and praise. The Spirit-filled sing and give thanks to God. Their joy springs up from within their souls, a perpetual fountain shimmering with light. They carry with them a refreshing and infectious gladness, and an abiding consciousness of peace. A joyless religion dishonours God. The man that repines and mopes, grumbles and growls, and goes about depressed and discouraged, is not living in the fulness of the Spirit. When He fills the soul it is as when men feel the tingling sensation of wine. It thrills and exhilarates the soul with an unspeakable sense of joy. The gladness will not manifest itself in all people in the same way. Water bubbles when it boils, but fat reveals its boiling

J. Luke
x. 21.
Eph. vi.
18-21.

Gal. v. 22.

by being still. It is not a question of bubbling or not bubbling ; it is a question of boiling. There are diversities of manifestation, but all must be filled, and being filled rejoice evermore.

We cannot be gladsome by resolution. The conviction that we ought to be happy will never make us happy. Joy is a fruit, the natural product of an inner life. There is nothing more gruesome than soulless mirth, the hideous laughter of the mouth without the laughter of the eyes. The joy of the Christian is the unconscious ripple of the soul living in the fulness of life and light. Make a man happy and his heart will sing, and when the heart sings, it will find some way of making a joyful noise. Every revival creates a new hymn-book. When the soul is stirred it needs no hireling to send forth its praise.

How does the fulness of the Spirit open a fountain of joy ? Moods are not lawless. What is the Spirit's secret of perpetual gladness ? The Spirit makes men glad with the consciousness of God, and a God-like enthusiasm for out-flowing. The soul sees God. When they stoned Stephen, " he being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." He rejoiced in the exalted Christ, and the ultimate triumph of His cause. Men shout at the sight of their King. The Spirit-filled live in a

Acts vii
55.

vision of the opened heavens, and that is why they rejoice amid the tumults of earth. Where others see nothing but disaster and darkness they behold the Glory of God. Life is linked with the throne of the Father in Christ Jesus. He can "give thanks always for all things." That is not cant. What impressed the representatives of the press at the international gathering of the Salvation Army was the singing faces of the people. One of them thought he had got at the secret of their happiness in an incident, that was not in the programme. Standing on the main staircase of the hall, he saw a Salvationist coming up with a small boy in a red jersey beside him. The boy fell. When he was lifted to his feet tears were in his eyes and a woeful look on his face. Taking hold of his hand, the father said, "Don't cry, laddie, say Alleluia!" The lad looked up through his tears and said, "A-A-Alleluia, F-F-Father," and went smiling into the hall. The press-man argued that if the religion of these people made them say Alleluia! through their tears, it was no wonder they were happy. And he was right.

They rejoice because they share God's enthusiasm for giving. Jesus Christ "through the eternal spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God": and in the same offering He gave Himself for sinful man. Pentecost was followed by an enthusiastic sale of lands, and the offering

of great gifts to God for the service of men. “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Misers never sing. The life that is poured forth for others is always full of joy. With gladness it yields to subjection that it may find occasion to serve. *Acts xx. 35.*

There is no life like the life filled with the Spirit. It is beyond the power of speech to set forth its glory and its might. Filled with all the fulness of God, energised and sustained by His indwelling, more than conqueror in His strength, sharing His ministry, rejoicing in His glory, it transcends human power to describe ; but it is every man’s privilege to realise it in his own soul. The Spirit waits to enter and abide ; to take possession and endue with life and power.

Mendelssohn once visited the Cathedral at Fribourg, and having heard the great organ went into the organ loft and asked to be allowed to play it. The old organist in jealousy for his instrument at first refused, but was at length prevailed upon, and allowed the stranger to try what was claimed to be the greatest organ in Europe. After standing by in an ecstasy of delight and amazement, he suddenly laid his hands on the shoulders of the inspired musician and exclaimed, “Who are you ? What is your name ?” “Mendelssohn,” replied the player, and with tears the old man exclaimed, “And can it be I had so nearly

refused to let Mendelssohn touch this organ ? ”

The Holy Spirit asks possession of your nature with all its possibilities and powers. Only He can fill your life and evoke from it all its melody and power. To be filled with the Spirit is to live the life of God.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

“This we also pray for, even your perfecting.”—2 *Cor.* xiii. 9.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

THERE is probably no subject Christian teachers touch so reluctantly as that of Christian Perfection. This is due partly to the difficulties of definition, and partly to the fact that it lays one open to misunderstanding. A sharp shaft of ridicule may be more damaging than logic. An argument can be met, but there is no answer to a sneer, and the fear of being thought a Pharisee has silenced many on the subject of perfection. A still deeper reason for reluctance is the conscious gulf that lies between the doctrine and experience. It is not easy to urge others to perfection while our own lives fall short ; and it is easy to take refuge in the differences and inconsistencies of those who profess it, and hold our peace. Such silence is neither courageous nor guiltless ; for while there may be but little hope of agreement in definition, there can be no doubt the Scriptures speak of a perfection that is both attainable and imperative.

The Scriptures command perfection, promise

perfection, and give examples of perfection. God does not mock us with impossible commands. For every demand He makes there is adequate grace supplied. A command is the reverse side of a promise, and a promise the reverse side of a command. Every obligation is a privilege, and every privilege an obligation. Noah, Abraham, and Job are all spoken of as perfect before God, and S. Paul exhorts the perfect in his Epistle to the Philippians. It will readily be objected that these men were far from perfect. Noah got drunk, Abraham told lies, and Job said some bitter things in his affliction, though he held to his integrity with remarkable tenacity. Even S. Paul in the same chapter where he speaks of the perfect, speaks of himself, "Not that I have already attained, or am already made perfect."

Phil. iii.
12.

There is an imperfect perfection. All perfection is relative except the perfection of God. Christian perfection does not indicate finality but fitness. A thing may be very imperfect as compared with its ultimate development, and yet be perfect in its present stage. Noah, we are told, was perfect in his generation, and it would be unfair to judge him by any other. The Sermon on the Mount corrects the deliverance of Sinai, but the law of Sinai was perfect for its time and work. A child may be perfect

as a child, but very imperfect judged by the manhood it will ultimately reach. In the endless progression of the Christian life every goal is a fresh starting point. Christian perfection is neither absolute nor angelic, and to complete the orthodox round, neither is it Adamic, but Christian.

I. THE MEANING OF PERFECTION.

Much of the difficulty concerning the subject has arisen from a confusion of terms. There is a perfection that is future and final, and there is a perfection that is practical and present. In the original Scriptures the two kinds of perfection are distinguished by the use of different words, but the English unfortunately has but one word for both. Our conceptions of the practical and present perfection will be simplified if we study the word in its non-doctrinal application. The Jewish law required of traders, "a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure." That is plain enough. Every purchaser believes in perfection behind the counter. In the Old Testament it is said of several kings that they did right, but not with a perfect heart. Their righteousness fell short of the standard measurement, and in every case their deficiency arose from lack of moral and spiritual qualities. The heart was divided.

*Deut. xxv.
15.*

Matt. iv.

21.

Heb. xi. 3.

Matt. xxi.

16.

Gal. vi. 1.

I Cor. i.

10.

I Thess.

iii. 10.

In the New Testament one of the words translated perfect is used of mending nets, adjusting worlds, arranging of harmony in music, repairing a fault, fitting to parts, and supplying deficiencies. The fisherman has no difficulty in understanding perfection as applied to his nets. They must be made fit for their purpose. The engineer knows the need for perfection in fitting part to part, if his machinery is to do its work. The musician understands the necessity for balance and proportion in the preparation of harmony. The pedestrian needs limbs perfect in their soundness, and must have the dislocated joint put right if he is to walk. The whole body has to be perfectly jointed if it is to do its work, and nothing can be perfect while any lack remains. To make perfect, therefore, means to make fit, to put in order, adjust, adapt, arrange, and equip, so as to secure effectiveness and efficiency for the result to be achieved. Whatever is perfect must be without deficiency, without division, without admixture of alien elements.

The meaning is the same when applied to Christian life and experience. It is the adjustment, cleansing, and equipment of man's nature for all the purposes of the life in Christ. It is nothing more than making man fit in every part to do the will of God. Everything that

hinders and dislocates is taken away ; the powers of mind, heart, and body are restored to their true order ; and every need of grace and power is supplied. There is no deficiency, no disorder, no discord ; the man of God is made perfect for, and in the will of God. Wesley's definition is short, simple and scriptural : "*Pure love alone reigning in the heart and life, this is the whole of Christian perfection.*"

II. ALL THE ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER ARE SET FORTH IN THE SCRIPTURES AS CAPABLE OF PERFECTION.

The elements that make up Christian character are FAITH, HOPE, LOVE ; and each of these may be perfect.

I. FAITH.

"Night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith." Their faith was deficient. It lacked something, but whatever it was in which they fell short, it was capable of being supplied. It is not unlikely the Apostle anticipated this perfecting in the prayer, "And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly ; and may your spirit, and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who will also do it."

1 Thess.
iii. 10.

1 Thess. v
23, 24.

Jas. ii. 22.

“Thou seest that faith wrought with His works, and by works was faith made perfect.” The point common to both these passages is that faith may be perfect. It may be made perfect by instruction as in the case of the Thessalonians, or by works as in the teaching of S. James. Whatever the process of perfecting, the perfect is possible. Life may be lived without doubt, without wavering, and without unbelief. At all times and in all things, the heart may be fully assured in the truth and will of God.

2. HOPE.

*1 Pet. i.
13.*

“Be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” In verse 21, faith and hope are joined together, but hope comes after faith. Faith plants its feet securely upon the certainties of the word. It examines, proves, and stakes everything upon assured truth. It builds on the rock. Hope gives wings to the soul. It dwells in the future. Its home is within the veil. Though billows and darkness be on every side, hope soars above them all, and out-flying the storm, dwells in the calm of eternal day. It is not riotous, unbridled imagination, but a sure and certain hope born of a clear and proved conviction of the soul. We are

begotten “unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” This living hope may be set perfectly on the grace that is to be revealed at the revelation of Jesus Christ. An unquenchable, eternal, perfect hope!

1 Pet.
3-5.

3. LOVE.

“Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment : because as He is, even so are we in this world. There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath punishment : and he that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

1 John iv.
17, 18.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”

S. Matt.
xxii. 37.

“Above all things put on Love, which is the bond of perfectness.”

Col. iii. 14.

Love made perfect ! Heart, soul, and mind cleansed from every defilement, united and harmonised, every part enthused with holy fervour and reverent devotion ! When love is perfect there is no fear because there is no sense of guilt, no unrest because no strife, no coldness

because no sin. The soul made perfect in love is delivered from all that separated it from God and divided man's nature against itself. It is restored and sanctified, renewed and adjusted, cleansed and filled with the presence of God. Love reigns, love radiates, love inspires, love transforms. Love is the sum of duty and the inspiration of life.

Perfect faith ; perfect hope ; perfect love ; these make the perfect man in the stature of the fulness of Christ.

This perfection is guaranteed as a definite and present experience. It is not the consummation of the Christian life but its condition. The perfecting of the saints at Christ's appearing is an altogether different matter. That is the end of our faith ; this is its preparation for the life of obedience in the will of God. It is the sanctification, adjustment, and equipment of man's nature that he may be a fit temple of an indwelling God, made meet for a life of holy fellowship, and an efficient instrument for holy service ; and since the Christian life has to be lived in the present world, the perfection is for present experience and work. It is not final but initiatory, not beyond the possibility of development but essentially progressive. Surely no man will say God is not able to cleanse perfectly, renew entirely, and endue completely,

every part of man redeemed by His grace and surrendered to His will. We have a Saviour who "is able to save to the uttermost," and "to make all grace abound unto you ; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything may abound unto every good work." He is a perfect Deliverer ; Jesus Christ is a perfect Saviour, and the Spirit is a perfect sanctifier, sustainer, and strengthener in the heart of man. Perfection is possible because it is the work of the perfect and infinite God.

Heb. vii
25.
2 Cor. ix.
8.

III. CHRISTIAN PERFECTION EXPERIENCED IN THE HEART IS MANIFEST IN THE LIFE.

"By their fruits ye shall know them." The perfection of faith, hope, and love bears fruit unto perfection in the graces of the Christian life. The fitness of machinery is proved in its working. The professions of efficiency must be tested by results. Does the perfecting of grace in the soul result in perfection in the practical out-working of the daily life ? Here again the meaning of the term must be kept in mind. Christian perfection does not mean faultlessness but blamelessness. It does not mean that a thing has reached the excellence beyond which there is no possibility of improvement, but that the work is perfect in motive, and perfect according to the capacity of the worker. That an act is

perfect in this sense implies that it is simple in aim, and faithful in execution. So with the Christian graces in the man made perfect. They lack no essential quality, and are adequate to the strain that is put upon them. Every exercise develops and improves them, but they are sufficient for immediate demand.

I. THE FIRST-FRUIT OF THE THREE-FOLD PERFECTION OF FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE, IS PATIENCE.

Jas. i. 4,

“Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.”

In 1 Thess. i. 3, the patience of hope follows the work of faith and the labour of love. Patience is the child of the three graces. The secret of patience is love, hopefulness, and confidence. Where any one of these elements is lacking patience will be wanting, but where these are, patience will have its perfect work; and surely we have need of patience.

The Christian made perfect in faith, hope, and love will be perfect in his patience with God. Jonah is not the only servant of the Lord who has got angry with his God. Neither is the impatient zeal of James and John which would invoke the consuming fires of heaven unknown among us. The long-suffering forbearance of God provokes earnest souls to impatience. The utter absence of Divine interference with

tragedy and suffering, and the apparent indifference of the Eternal to helpless anguish, Wring the cry from the heart, Where is God ? As the earnest reformer broods over the appalling scenes that confront him, and listens to heart-breaking stories of cruelty and blood, he is driven to wonder how God can sit in the heavens and witness such wretchedness and suffering. The massacre of helpless women and the butchery of little children ; treachery, bloodshed, hypocrisy and devilry lie open to His omniscient gaze. We look up to the stars from the weltering mass of moaning humanity, and wonder why He does not step out from the heavens, and break the forces of wickedness in pieces. We would. Who has not clenched his fist in the presence of monstrous iniquity and vowed what he would do if he were God ? He is mercifully patient with our impatience, and when our anger is spent, and we have sobbed out our grief He lulls the disquieted soul to rest like a tired child. Then faith returns to its moorings, hope spreads its wings again, and love waits in patience for the coming of the Lord. Though the Kingdom of God come slowly and all things seem to continue as they were, we know that He who cannot lie has sworn to His Son that He shall have the nations for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession ; and

Ps. ii. 8.*Heb.* ii.
8, 9.

though we see not yet all things subjected to Him, we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour. In that vision faith rests, hope sings, and love waits.

To many, patience with people is more difficult than patience with God. Of the Messiah it was said, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." He was patient with weak and troublesome people. In Him patience had its perfect work. S. Paul speaks of patient endurance as the crowning triumph of grace. He was often tempted to be impatient with fickle and slow people. Steadfast, and flaming with zeal himself, he marvelled at the readiness with which people were turned aside, and the slowness with which they learned the things of God. There is nothing can make us patient with trying people except faith in them, hope for them, and love of them.

In every lot we have need of patience. S. James exhorts us to take the prophets "for an example of suffering and of patience," reminding us that we call them blessed which endured, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that He is full of pity, and merciful. There were times when even men of faith could not sing. They hanged their harps on the willows of their grief. But they always had hope. They hung up their harps but they did not break them, nor sell them,

Isa. xlii.

4.

Jas. v
10, 11.

nor fling them away : they simply hung them up till their hearts could sing again. Things are hung up to be taken down again. You cannot bear the music to-day, but the song will return, and you will yet praise Him Who is the health of your countenance and your God. In such seasons "let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not ; for He is faithful that promised." It is in patient endurance the soul is won and the promise received. There is no interpreter of life's mysteries like patience. To them that wait upon the Lord, that do not hurry in their impatience, there shall be given strength, and light, and joy.

Heb. x.
23.

S. Luke
xxi. 19.

Heb. x.
36.

Grace will enable them to be patient under provocation that is malicious and unjust. Read the words of S. Peter, "For what glory is it, if when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently ? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." When people are unreasonable, unjust, and ungrateful, when the more you try the more they grumble, the perfect life is patient even then. The crowning mark of the perfection of the patience of the life made perfect is in the passage : "Walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God ; strengthened with all power according to

1 Pet. ii.
20.

Col. i. 10,
11, 12.

the might of His glory, unto *all patience and long-suffering with joy ; giving thanks unto the Father.*" Patience and long-suffering with joy and thanksgiving ! That surely is the hall-mark of perfect patience.

2. PERFECT OBEDIENCE TO THE WILL OF GOD.

Holiness is the objective of grace. Adjustment and cleansing, Divine indwelling and in-working are all for the purpose of holiness of heart and righteousness of life. Goodness is the goal of all God's working. Faith is made perfect by its works ; hope purifies by its vision ; and love not only keeps the commandments but sets them to music.

Col iv. 12.

"That ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God."

2 Tim. iii.
16, 17.

"Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness : that the man of God may be complete (A.V. *perfect*), furnished completely unto every good work."

Heb. xiii.
20, 21.

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ,

to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Perfect and fully assured in all the will of God ; perfect, furnished completely unto every good work ; perfect, in every good thing to do His will. Christian perfection means that a man lives in the assurance of God’s approval ; that he is equipped and abounds in good works, and that his outward life is inspired and energised by an indwelling and inworking God. He not only does the will of God ; he revels in it ; it is his meat and drink. He not only abstains from evil, he abounds in goodness. He not only attains to holiness, but in his virtue there is the spontaneity of life and the ease of power. Beware of all teaching of perfection divorced from obedience. Faith that makes void the law, hope that does not purify, and love that does not keep the commandments, are a blasphemy and a lie. The soul made perfect in grace dwells in God and obeys His will. Business, friendship, home, pleasure, and all else are adjusted to His mind and maintained according to His pleasure. Such perfect obedience is only possible to perfect faith, perfect hope, and perfect love ; but to faith, hope, and love all things are possible.

3. A PERFECT TONGUE.

“ If any stumbleth not in word, the same *Jas. iii. 2.* is a perfect man.”

“Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle,” said Michael Angelo. Perfection in all God’s work extends to all the minutiae of His operations. He takes the same infinite pains over an insect’s wing as in the making of a planet. The test of perfection is in its perfection of finish. The perfection of the perfect man finds its test in his speech. The tongue reveals the heart. It gives form and expression to the hidden things of the soul, “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.” “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Who can keep his tongue? The hasty, thoughtless, idle, false, and fiery words slip off so easily. It is a little member, but it has tremendous power, and is very difficult to control. It can only be cleansed and kept from within. A clean tongue is possible only to a clean heart, and a perfect tongue only to a perfect man. Here, again, salvation is in faith, hope, and charity. Evil speaking is a special snare to those who have received special gifts of grace. Censoriousness is the besetting sin of the sanctified. A watch, therefore, should be set upon the lips, for no man is perfect whose tongue is not kept from evil. Christian perfection magnifies the grace of God that is able to keep from stumbling in word as well as in deed.

4. PERFECT PEACE.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.”

Isa. xxvi.
3.

What a promise! Perfect peace! Who can fathom its depth and meaning? And yet, it is the natural result of adjustment, adaptation, and power. What is peace but the stillness of harmony, proportion, and balance? When there is peace it means that all the varying forces have been so blended as to become a unit. It is the stillness and stability which is the perfection of energy. The earth is still because of its velocity. Its stability is in its speed. So in the man made perfect. His nature is unified and harmonised with God. All the forces that centre in the heart are so subjected, balanced, unified, and kept, that there is unbroken, eternal, and perfect peace. Perfect peace! No friction, no controversy, no strife, no shrinking, no strain, no coercion, no condemnation! Peace, perfect peace! It is a blessed, cloudless life of unbroken harmony. Peace for all time and all the time, so perfect that neither earth nor Hell can disturb it, as unchanging and abiding as the God of peace from whom it comes. This also is the fruit of perfect faith, perfect hope, and perfect love. Without these there can be no peace, but where these are perfect, perfect peace abides.

IV. "IF THOU WOULDST BE PERFECT!"

For such a life who among the redeemed has not sighed and prayed? Not only for perfection, which shall be ours when we see Jesus face to face in the Father's House, but for the life of patience, obedience, victory, and peace in this present life, our hearts have cried with agony and tears. To-day the Saviour looks and challenges us to perfection. The very "if" assumes the possibility. He takes no low views of the possibilities of grace. His call is to perfection. How then may we attain unto a life so glorious? We must remember that it is not by law. "The law made nothing perfect." Neither is it by anything we offer to God. Gifts and sacrifices cannot make the worshipper perfect. Perfection is neither by the law of Moses, nor by the law of the Sanctuary. It is the work and gift of God, and can only become ours by CONSECRATION, CLEANSING, and INDWELLING.

Heb. vii.
19.

Heb. ix. 9.

Matt. xix.
21.

I. "If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come, follow Me."

That is the first great commandment of the perfect life: absolute and unconditional surrender of the whole life to God.

2 Cor. vii.
1.

2. "Having therefore these promises, be-

loved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

After surrender, cleansing. The Temple of the Lord must be clean before it can be filled with the glory of His presence.

3. "Now the God of peace . . . make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ."

Heb. xiii.
20, 21.

"Christ liveth in me."

Gal. ii. 20.

After cleansing, indwelling. The life is not the life of the perfect man, but of the perfect Christ who dwells and works in the soul by His Spirit. It is God's work. "The God of all grace . . . shall Himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you." It is the work of the perfect Worker, and everyone whom He perfects shall be as his Master. "Faithful is He that calleth you, who will also do it," and when He has done it, we need not proclaim it, for perfection, above all things, cannot be hid. "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, with the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

1 Pet. v.
10.

Luke vi.
40.

1 Thess.
v. 24.

THE CHURCH AND THE
KINGDOM

“ And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church ; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

“ I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.”—*S. Matt.* xvi. 18, 19.

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

CREEDS are the creation of experience. They are the expression of the truth that has been realised in the soul. A creed repeated on the mere authority of another is a meaningless form utterly without value as a saving power. The letter killeth. It is another man's experience, without any answering note in our own, and truth can only quicken and save as it is experienced in the heart. However void and dead forms of truth may become, they were born of vital processes within the soul, and came into being throbbing with the life-blood of the man who had been stirred and thrilled by their power. That is why we find every development in the revelation of truth inseparably identified with some personality. The truth defined and proclaimed is the truth as it has been realised in the man to whom it was revealed. The man stands for the faith. The Gospel of each Apostle is the Gospel of the Christ as revealed in him. S. Francis of Assisi stands for brotherhood and voluntary poverty in the

love of God and the service of man. Martin Luther stands for the Reformation with its Gospel of free access to the Father. Oliver Cromwell stands for the freedom of conscience in the worship and service of God. George Fox stands for the inward light in the person of the indwelling Spirit. John Wesley stands for the consuming passion of saving grace in Christ Jesus.

In the course of time it comes to pass that the person who first revealed the truth is so exalted as to obscure the very truth he once revealed. Instead of being the embodiment of the truth he becomes the substitute for it. Their followers range themselves under their names as leaders rather than receive their teaching. The creed becomes a standard of orthodoxy instead of the expression of a living faith. Then men fight for it and fight with it, instead of living it. Men shout the names of leaders but do not follow them. The name of the man counts for more than the truth, and when such is the case, it becomes necessary for the man to be eliminated that the truth may be saved. The personality has become a hindrance to the very truth to which it gave life and power.

That is exactly what has happened to the teaching of Jesus in this passage. It has been obscured by the very man who inspired it. Peter has to be eliminated from the passage before we can get

at its real significance. He was essential to its expression, but he is not necessary to its interpretation. Having called it forth he is no longer an essential part of it, and may be removed without loss. He belongs to the occasion rather than to the substance of the truth. It is easy to understand the prominence given to his personality. He was the first to confess that Jesus was the Son of the Living God. The Christ welcomed his confession, and greeted Peter as the first of a great multitude who would receive the same revelation, and make the same confession. That multitude would constitute His Church. Peter was the first stone in the spiritual building laid upon the foundation-rock. He was the first, and in him stood represented at that moment the entire Church of Christ. In the birth-hour of His Church, and in the presence of its first member He defined its character, declared its mission, and spoke of both as represented in the person of the first confessor of His Name. It is not the personality of Peter that is of abiding and essential importance, but the confession he made and the declaration it called forth. This is proved by the rebuke which so soon followed the benediction. The very same Apostle is addressed as a messenger of Satan doing not the work of God but of the devil. Peter confessing is the rock. Peter rebuking is a stone of stumbling. It is the truth

that is of eternal importance, not the man through whom it comes.

The passage sets forth—

I. THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S CHURCH ;

II. THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE KINGDOM ;

III. THE CONDITION OF ITS AUTHORITY AND POWER.

I

Jesus did not say He would build a Church, or even the Church, but "I will build My Church." It is not often He speaks of anything as His own. He speaks of "My Father," and after that, nothing remains to Him but His people: "My Sheep," "My brethren," "My Church." He spoke also of His life, His peace, and His joy, but these were phases of experience rather than actual possessions. In the great act of self-emptying He surrendered all but His Father and His Church. From the fact that His Church is retained with the Father, we may get some glimpse of the value He set, and still sets upon His people. They are His peculiar possession, His only wealth, and His eternal glory.

The Church is Christ's by the gift of God. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven." This is in harmony with all His references to His flock.

“No one knoweth the Son, save the Father.” The revelation of the Son is from the Father, even as the revelation of the Father is through the Son.

S. Matt
xi. 27.

“All that which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me ; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Speaking of the protection of His own, He said, “My Father, which hath given them unto Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.” In the great intercessory prayer He speaks throughout of those who have received eternal life as the Father’s gift to Him. “I manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world : Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me.” “I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me ; for they are Thine : and all things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine : and I am glorified in them.” “Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me.” “Father, that which Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me ; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me.” When the Father of glory raised Jesus Christ from the dead, He “made Him to sit at His right hand in the Heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is

S. John
vi. 37.

S. John
x. 29.

S. John
xvii. 6.

S. John
xvii. 9, 10

S. John
xvii. 11.

S. John
xvii. 24.

Eph. i.
20-23.

named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come : and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." The Church is the Father's gift to His Son.

The Church is Christ's also by purchase and by conquest. How can a gift be by purchase, and how can a purchase be by conquest ? There is no confusion in the paradox. It needs all the terms of Scripture to set forth the whole truth, and where they seem to conflict there is deepest harmony. We are His by conquest, and we are His by the will of the Father. He redeemed us with His own blood. "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it ; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish." In the Apocalypse Jesus is declared to be in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, the seven stars are in His right hand, and the doxologies of the redeemed are, "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood ; and He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father ; to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

Eph. v.
25-27.

Rev. i. 5, 6.

It is manifest that the Church is very precious to Jesus its Head and Lord. It is His Bride. As the bridegroom rejoices over his bride so does Christ rejoice over His Church. For Her He surrendered all, giving even His life for Her possession. Upon Her He has centred His heart with all the ardour of a lover's passion. To Her He has devoted all the resources of His nature, all the wealth of His glory, and all the glory of His triumph. The Bride is the hope and joy of His heart as well as His glory, in the presence of the Father and His holy angels.

The Church is His Body. All that the body is to man the Church is to Jesus Christ. A man's body is the home in which he dwells, the medium of his manifestation, and the instrument of his will. The Church is the Body of Christ. In it He dwells, through it He is revealed, by it He works. No man can despise the Church who understands its preciousness and value to Jesus Christ. It is impossible to conceive an intimacy more sacred or a value more rare. To despise the Church is to wound its Lord. The Bridegroom is jealous for the honour of His Bride, and His Body is vital to all His saving purpose in the world. He is the Head of His Church. He keeps the Roll. Each member is known by name to Him, and each is to Him a priceless possession, begotten of the travail of His own soul. "My

Church"—MINE! My very own! The gift of the Father, the fruit of His own passion, the purchase of His own blood, loved from the foundation of the world.

THE CHURCH IS A SPIRITUAL ORDER.

Its character is revealed in Christ's interpretation of its first Christian confession. Peter had made confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus declared that confession to have come, not by observation, not by tradition, not by any process of man's reason, but by direct revelation of the Father. The knowledge of the Son of God comes only through revelation. That revelation received in the heart and confessed before men, was the qualification for fellowship in His Church. All such should be added to, and built upon this rock. Peter is *Petros*, a piece of rock, and upon this *Petra* the rock, Christ will build His Church. The Church of Christ is a community of people of like faith with Peter, who know Christ as he had come to know Him, and who confess Christ as he confessed Him. The same confession dictated by authority or received by tradition avails nothing. To call Jesus Lord can never save. The second-hand repetition of another man's experience is useless. Inspired truth stereotypes into formula. That which was the expression of life then continues as a custom with all the rigid correctness of death. It is not

enough to receive the testimony from flesh and blood, by the traditions, customs, fashions, and authority of man. It must come by immediate and personal revelation.

Every member of the Living Church is a Divine creation, enlightened by the revelation of the Father, energised by the Divine Spirit, and builded of God into the community of Heaven-born souls. Nothing else can constitute a claim to membership. There must be in each, an inward witness and an open confession. This can be accomplished by nothing less than the direct work of God upon the soul. It is not by rites of baptism, or of any ecclesiastical power ; neither is it by education and refinement. The only entrance is by the New Birth. Only the converted have a right to membership in the Church of Christ. It is a living Temple into which only living stones can be built. It is not of man's building ; its Maker and Builder is God.

This community of heaven-born witnesses is essentially Christian. It centres in Christ. It radiates from Him. Its life is in Him. Its energies are directed by Him. He is its Head and its Lord. Admission is conditioned upon knowledge of His Person and confession of His Name. It follows, therefore, that the Church of Christ exists for Christ. Its first function is to fulfil His purpose, and it must always be at the disposal of

His will. It must be true to His principles, manifest His Spirit, and be governed by His purpose. The Church can never be warranted in any departure from His principles in the interests of policy. The New Testament knows nothing of policy as a motive of conduct. Christ is Lord. The Church exists to represent and obey Him.

Some Churches have not the Christ. They are named by His Name, but they have thrust Him to the door. It was at the door of a Church that Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Churches that misrepresent His Spirit and despise His conditions; Churches that are directed by human energy and controlled by human desire; Churches that turn the House of God into a play-house, a place of merchandise, and a den of thieves; Churches that admit unspiritual men to their communion and unchristian men to the service of the sanctuary; such places have ceased to be Churches of Jesus Christ. They may be useful centres of social life, associations for mutual gratification, organisations for the display of vanity, or at best a basis for educational and philanthropic enterprise; but they are not Christian Churches. The Churches need to come back to the recognition of this simple truth, that the Church of Christ must first be Christian.

The impregnable rock of the Church is its spiritual character. "The gates of Hades shall not

prevail against it." But they will try. The only thing the devil hates is a living witness to the Son of God. All the forces of evil are hurled against this centre of Divine energy and power in the soul. Whatever is of the flesh is to his mind, but that which is of the Spirit is fatal to his power. The Church is always assailed for its testimony. The reality of its revelation is challenged, and the truth of its witness denied. So long as the Church is content to be one of many useful institutions, to take its place among the world's systems of religion and philosophy, and to claim nothing for its Lord that may not be claimed by others, the world will not only tolerate, but patronise, fraternise, and co-operate. But when Heaven is claimed for its authority, Divinity for its Lord, and a personal revelation for its testimony, Hell is let loose. Wherever there is a Spirit-born witnessing for Christ, there the forces of evil gather. The Living Christ realised in the soul is the defence of His Church. Not the Church of tradition, but the Christ directly revealed of the Spirit, dwelling in the heart, witnessed by the lips, and demonstrated in the life. That is the impregnable rock.

It is by the omnipotence of unquenchable life that God always prevails. In the eighteenth century Deism held the Churches of England in its paralysing grip and godlessness covered the

land. Bishop Butler routed the Deists, and influential societies were formed for the reformation of the people, but it was the Evangelical Revival that rescued the Churches, and saved the nation. In the early seventies of the last century infidelity of the most blatant type was rampant. The supposed conclusions of science gave apparent authority to their assumptions, and with open mouth they poured out blasphemies. Ministers of religion and others of the Christian faith answered them in open debate, and in the press ; but it was the Great Revival that turned their halls of science into houses of prayer, where the Lord they denied demonstrated Himself in the deliverance of men from the captivity of sin and death. God's unanswerable argument is life. "Ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves." The defence of the Church is its life which is the gift of God. The best evidence of Christianity is a Christian. The all-prevailing power is the power of the Resurrection. Against that, the gates of Hades cannot prevail.

Ezek.
xxxvii. 13.

II

THE CHURCH HOLDS THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM.

"I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." The hope of the Kingdom is greater than that of the Church. It was

for the Kingdom the prophets looked, and it was for the Kingdom John the Baptist called men to prepare. The Kingdom was the theme and promise of Christ. It was of the Kingdom He taught continually, and now that the time of His departure is at hand, He commits to His Church the keys of His Kingdom. To the Jew the Kingdom of God meant a political and social order of righteousness, prosperity, and peace. To Jesus it meant the unification of Heaven and earth : the will of God realised on earth as in Heaven. When He says His Kingdom is not of this world He does not mean it is not for it. The " world " with which the Kingdom is ever at war is not the world which is the sphere and object of redeeming grace, but the world-spirit, which seeks its gratification within the bounds of the present. The world He came to destroy is the rule of life by the baser instincts of the earthly and immediate ; the world He came to save is the sum total of humanity, the material which is to be transformed by the energy of a new indwelling. " The field is the world," and the world is to become the Kingdom of God, governed by His will ; the Kingdom of Heaven realising Heaven's life and blessedness ; the Kingdom of Christ, saved, renewed, and inspired by His Spirit. It means the redemption of the world from sin, and fear and strife, and its restoration to righteousness, love, and peace.

S. Matt.
xiii. 38.

This is the work Jesus Christ seeks to accomplish in the world, and for which His Church is trusted with the keys of the Kingdom.

The Keys have been the subject of endless controversy. Their significance, their power, and the right to their possession have agitated the Church for centuries. It is certain, however, that the right to admit and exclude in the Church of Christ was not in the Master's thoughts. They are not the Keys of the Church but the Keys of the Kingdom. Their bestowal defines the relation of the Church to the Kingdom, and the kind of power it exercises in the Kingdom. The possession of the Keys of the Kingdom cannot mean less than the power to open the doors of the Kingdom to the people for whom it is established. This is what Peter did on the day of Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius. Others also used the Keys. Philip opened the door at Samaria, unknown Christians exercised the same power at Antioch, and Paul carried the Keys into many lands.

The Church holds the Keys. Its work is to be accomplished not by carnal weapons but by spiritual power. The Church carries not a sword but a bunch of keys. Its messengers are not warriors but preachers of the Word and missionaries of the Cross. The Kingdom waits for the Church. Doors remain closed till the Church brings the

Key. Jesus Christ cannot extend His Kingdom faster than His Church is prepared to go. Christianity is not a rule that can be imposed; it is a life that must be propagated. It is useless simply to tell men Jesus is the Christ. There must be a work of God in the soul, which is the work of the Spirit. When the vitality of the Church is low the power of the Spirit is restrained and the Kingdom halts. When the Church is revived the Kingdom extends. The evangelisation of the world is in the hands of Christ's Church, and proceeds according to the measure of the faith, zeal, and sacrifice of them that believe. To the Church is entrusted the knowledge of Christ's Name, the glad teachings of His grace, and the conversion of the world; and the Christ cannot come to the possession of His own except as the Church opens the door.

III

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH IS BASED UPON EXPERIENCE.

The Keys were given to the Apostle who had come to the knowledge of Christ by the revelation of the Father. He spoke for the rest and received the Keys as their representative. They still accompany the revelation, and are continued only to those who abide in the fellowship and harmony of Heaven. The power of the Keys is

not official, but experimental. The actions and judgements of the Church on earth are ratified in Heaven only when they are the exercise of Heaven's will. The works of Christ's Body are the manifestation of Christ's mind and will. The discernment of the moral quality of things to be bound and loosed demands a moral faculty possible only to those in harmony with the Divine nature, and instructed of the Divine Spirit. To represent Heaven upon earth requires the life of Heaven within the soul. It is as the Church represents Christ that its voice and judgements are endorsed by Him.

That the authority of the Church is thus conditioned upon the Living Christ indwelling and directing its counsels and labours is evident from the Master's stern rebuke of Peter. The same Apostle He had blessed with such distinction He flung from Him with reproach. Why? Because he was no longer acting as the God-taught apostle, but as the messenger of Satan. Peter is as representative in the second scene as in the first. The Church needs to carefully study them both. When the Divine testimony is the revelation of God in the soul, the Church has the benediction of Heaven, but when the things of men displace the things of God, the Church ceases to be Christ's representative, and becomes the servant of the devil. Worldliness unchurches the Church.

Then the power of the Keys is lost, and the judgments are not of God but of men. Minding the things of men and not the things of God ; putting the human before the Divine, the earthly before the heavenly ; that is the curse and condemnation of the Church. Such a Church shirks the Cross. It shrinks from crucifixion, and cries even to the Christ : Spare Thyself ! Self-sparing leads to self-seeking, self-indulgence, self-glorification. Saving ourselves we lose the power to save. Confession is the starting-point for the Cross. "From that time," Jesus began to teach His disciples that the Cross was the badge of discipleship, and crucifixion the way of conquest.

The Church exists for the Kingdom. Some day they will be one, but at present they do not coincide. The Kingdom of God is larger than the Christian Church, for the Church spiritual is not identical with the boundaries of the organised Churches, and the Kingdom of God includes all who love righteousness and practise charity, many of whom have never heard of Christ, but are accepted of God. The Kingdom is not the Church ; the Church is the means for realising the Kingdom. The Church is not an end but an agent and an instrument. What a glorious mission to open the prison doors to them that are bound, and the way of life to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death ! The work of

the Church is at the gates of Hell, not one of which can prevail against its power. What a terrible responsibility to leave men in the agonies of Hell when we have the Keys of deliverance ! Unclaimed continents wait for the man with the Keys. Sin-bound souls at our doors are perishing for the Gospel of the Son of God. The Saviour travails for the salvation of those for whom He died. In the Church lies the power to save the sinner, bring in the Kingdom, and satisfy the heart of Christ. The Keys of the Kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy are with you ; in your hand and in your heart. For the sake of the perishing millions and for the sake of Christ who died for our salvation, may God revive His Church, and hasten the coming of His Kingdom.

VICARIOUS FAITH

“And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven.”—*S. Mark* ii. 5.

VICARIOUS FAITH

THE healing of the man sick of the palsy is an instance of vicarious faith. By "vicarious" we mean something done for and instead of another. It is substitutionary. The vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ means that Christ suffered in our stead, and died for our sins. So there is a faith that is exercised in behalf of another, and is accepted for another. This palsied man received both the forgiveness of his sins and the healing of his body, through the faith of the men who brought him. It was not simply a co-operation of their faith with his, it was accepted instead of his. There may have been an element of faith in the man himself, but there is no mention of it, and the emphasis is laid on the faith of the men who carried him to the feet of Jesus. Seeing *their* faith, He saith, not to them, but "unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven."

When a vital principle has been discovered at any given point of the Scriptures, it is wonderful how it is afterwards seen to be in every

part. Men are sometimes reproached for finding the Gospel in Genesis and Holiness in Leviticus, but they find them there because they are everywhere. So it is with vicarious faith. That which seemed to be an exception is discovered to be a law of the Kingdom. Of the twenty-four miracles of healing recorded in the Gospels, at least seven were healed entirely through the faith of others. It is not simply the faith of the strong coming to the help of the weak, but a faith prevailing for the helpless apart from any faith of their own.

I. INSTANCES OF VICARIOUS FAITH.

Recall the more conspicuous instances of the vicarious exercise of faith, and see how true this is.

There came to Jesus in Capernaum "a centurion beseeching Him and saying, Lord, my servant lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And He saith unto him, I will come and heal him." The thought of such condescension overwhelmed the Centurion, and he protested that he was not worthy to receive Him under his roof, and argued from his own authority that it was not necessary He should come. If He would only say the word, his servant would be healed. Jesus marvelled, and declared that He had not found a faith so great,

S. Matt.
viii. 5-13.

even in Israel; and turning to the Centurion, He said, "Go, thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour." Whose faith healed him? Not the servant's, but his master's. Not a word is said about the faith of the man who was healed. It is attributed entirely to the faith exercised vicariously for him.

On another occasion there came from Capernaum to Cana of Galilee a nobleman whose child was sick, and he besought Jesus "that He would come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death." Instead of yielding at once as in the case of the Centurion, He began to reprove the spirit that cannot believe except it see signs and wonders. Impatient of delay, and too distressed to be interested in abstract discussions, the father of the dying child burst into an impassioned appeal: "Lord, come down ere my child die." There was no moment to be lost. Twenty-five miles had to be travelled, and even now it may be too late. He did not conceive healing to be possible without contact. Neither the passionate appeal nor the journey was necessary, and "Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth." The astonished father "believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and went his way." He rested upon the bare word of Jesus, but as he went "his way"

S. John iv.
46r54.

he found the word confirmed by the testimony of his servants, who declared the child to have been healed at the very hour the word was spoken and believed. Whose faith saved the child? That son was healed entirely through the faith of the father vicariously exercised twenty-five miles away.

S. Mark
ix. 14-29.

There is another instance where a father's faith prevailed for an only child. In the incident at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus threw back the healing of the demoniac boy upon the faith of the father. It was not a question of Christ's power but of the father's faith. "Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." Then Jesus took the lad by the hand and lifted him up, healed. Whose faith saved the lad? Not his own, not the disciples', but his father's.

S. Matt.
xv. 21-28.
S. Mark
vii. 24-30.

Still more striking is the faith of the Greek woman in the district of Tyre and Sidon. Jesus had withdrawn into that region that He might escape from the persistent persecution of His adversaries. He wanted to be quiet, and requested that no one should be told of His presence: but He could not be hid. A woman whose daughter was grievously afflicted discovered Him. She threw herself at His feet, and cried, beseeching Him to cast the evil spirit

out of her daughter. "But He answered her not a word." He never treated any other person as He treated this woman. She got up and followed Him, pleading as she went, till the disciples begged Him to grant her request and send her away. His silence had been bad enough, but His speech was still more discouraging, for He said, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel." Again she fell at His feet, and looking up into His face poured out her soul in one of the shortest prayers ever uttered, "Lord help me." Speaking directly to her for the first time, He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." Such a remark would have silenced most people and sent them home offended, but her woman's wit turned it into an argument, and prevailed. She answered Him, "Yea, Lord : even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith ; be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour." When she got home, she found her daughter lying peacefully upon the bed, and the evil spirit gone out of her. Whose faith had brought her healing ? It came, not through any faith of her own, but in response to the mighty faith of her mother.

Thus we have the faith of a master prevailing for the healing of a servant, the faith of fathers exercised to the healing of sons, the faith of a mother triumphing for her daughter, and the faith of four friends blessed to the healing of a fifth; in every instance a faith working vicariously to the healing of another.

This vicarious faith is not confined to miracles of healing. It runs through all the New Testament, and is a recognised law in the Kingdom of grace. It lies at the very foundation of all intercession. Take one example: "Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him." Whatever difficulties the passage may present with regard to Divine healing it gives a plain direction and embodies a Divine principle. It is an example of the vicarious operation of faith in prayer. A number of praying men come together to pray over a brother in need, and the prayer of faith brings both healing and forgiveness to the man for whom prayer is made. Nothing is said about the faith of the sick man. His exercise of faith is in sending for the elders. It is the faith of the men that pray that raises him up.

These are all examples of the one great truth that faith may be vicariously exercised, so as to bring blessing into the life of others who may themselves be destitute of faith.

II. THE OPERATIONS OF VICARIOUS FAITH.

Vicarious faith begins by making the needs of another its own. Fellowship of woe precedes vicariousness in faith. The affliction of the child is the continual grief of the parent. "If Thou canst do anything for *us*," was the plea of the distracted father. "Have mercy on *me*," was the cry of the mother whose daughter was grievously vexed with a devil; and when it seemed as though her request would be denied, the identification of the intercessor with the sufferer becomes more manifest in the petition, "Lord, help *me*." The mother suffered in her child before she could believe for her deliverance. Such faith is possible only to burdened hearts. The Sinless One carried away the world's sin by taking it unto Himself. He was made sin for us. He "Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases," and His people enter into the fellowship of His sufferings in the work of salvation. There is but one way of salvation, as there is but one Name by which men can be saved. The followers of Christ in their measure become the vicarious bearers of the

S. Matt.
viii. 17.

Zech. iii.
1-4.

world's sorrow and shame. In Zechariah's vision the High Priest stood before the Lord clothed with the filthy garments of Israel. Satan rebuked him; but Joshua had taken the sins of the people upon himself, and borne them upon his own soul into the presence of Jehovah. Vicarious faith begins in vicarious sorrow and vicarious shame. The sins of others become a personal burden, and the sorrows of others a personal grief, before faith vicariously pleads and claims. When the soul travails faith prevails.

VICARIOUS FAITH IN THE WORK OF SALVATION. When Jesus saw the faith of the men who brought their palsied friend, He did not begin by commanding the sick man to take up his bed and walk, but by announcing the forgiveness of his sins. "Seeing their faith, He saith to the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven." However startling it may seem, this man received the forgiveness of his sins through the faith of others. Is that heresy? Is not personal faith the one essential condition of salvation? Has it not been told us from the beginning that no man can believe another into the Kingdom of Grace? It is true no man can be saved by proxy, but it is also true we are saved vicariously. Just as this palsied man was personally assured of forgiveness through the faith of the

friends who brought him to Jesus, so every saved soul is brought to the personal knowledge of salvation through the faith of others working on his behalf. The vicarious operation of faith is not exceptional in salvation, but general, if not universal. If some one had not believed for us, it is not likely we should ever have believed for ourselves. We were prayed for before we began to pray for ourselves. The Christian is begotten of God through the travail of some believing soul. There is a human as well as a Divine element in the process of soul-birth, and every man's salvation begins in the faith of another.

Experience everywhere bears witness to the vicarious operation of faith. The processes of generation are shrouded in mystery, and there are many children of God who cannot trace their experience of regeneration to any definite occasion or influence. Such Christians are to be congratulated, for as a rule the beginnings of spiritual life with them are among the unrecognised and forgotten influences of childhood. People, however, who come to the knowledge of God in maturer years, are able to trace their spiritual lineage, and to point out the influences that brought them into the Kingdom. The Apostles speak of those who owe to them their own souls, because they were begotten

of them in the Gospel. So it is still. We are brought into the experience of Saving Grace through the faith exercised for us. It is because we were believingly brought to the feet of Christ by those who believed for the salvation of our souls, we are saved.

How manifest this is in leading penitent souls to the Saviour! Take any case of a degraded sinner, such as every revival brings into the Inquiry Room. For a season the Church has sought those who live regardless of its existence, and whenever they are earnestly sought they come. The Gospel, faithfully and believingly preached, reveals the darkness of the heart, conscience strikes terror into the soul, or tender entreaty awakens thoughts of other days. A Christian worker with a gentle hand seeks to lead the wanderer back to God, but is answered with a wail of despair: "No, I am too bad; I might have been a Christian once, but it is too late now; you do not know all about me or you would not ask me. No, I am lost, it is too late, too late; I am too bad." What is the answer to such a cry? It is nothing less than believing for the soul that has no faith for itself. The promises are spread forth, the assurances of the Gospel repeated, and the believer stakes his own honour and God's on the possibility of immediate and complete salvation. Persistent despair is met

with insistent faith until it yields to hope, and the soul tremblingly stretches out its hands to God. Personal faith brings salvation, but it leans hard upon the strength of the faith that is vicarious. The curse of sin is its despair, and unless those who believe in God go down into the depths, and take hold of hopeless and helpless men and women with a mighty faith, they will perish in their sins.

Vicarious faith never despairs. It seeks desperate cases, and delights to bring the palsied and devil-possessed to the feet of Christ. The saddest thing in Christian workers is that they despair so soon. Whole areas are regarded as hopeless, and are abandoned for more favourable districts. Individuals are given up and left alone because it is thought to be useless to seek their salvation. Until the Church has an undaunted and unquenchable faith in the possibility of every man's salvation, and is prepared to go down to the depths and believe men back to God, it will neither raise the dead nor cast out devils. So long as the peril of the unsaved is not felt to be a burden, and the possibility of their salvation a certainty, devils will defy the hosts of the Lord. I once asked a man who had been a notorious sinner what led him first to believe it possible for him to be a good man. "Well," said he, "Sister believed it, and told

me God could do it, so I came to believe it too." How like the Samaritans, who believed on Christ because of the word of the woman who testified, and then believed because they had seen and heard for themselves. "And they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy speaking : for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

S. John
iv. 39-42.

Some time ago an evangelist was engaged to conduct mission services in a godless little town in the West. The minister, in whose Church the services were to be held, wrote him a doleful account of the irreligion and wickedness of the place. He had no hope that they would be able to do much, but assured him they would stand by him to the utmost of their power. The missionary began his work by making a tour of the public houses on the Saturday night. In some he sang, in others he spoke cheerily, and invited them to the services. He was guest in the home of one of the leading business places of the town. The family seemed to consist of a woman and her daughter. One day as he sat at tea he asked his hostess if she were a widow. She replied, "No, I wish I was," and proceeded to tell him the sad story of drunkenness, debauchery, and cruelty that had cursed their home for five and twenty years.

When she had finished, he asked, "Do you pray for him?" "No," she said; "I have given up, it is no use." Turning to the daughter, he asked her the same question, and she said, "No, I never pray for my father." "Then," he said, "if you don't, I must. If I pray for him, will you say Amen?" Reluctantly they agreed. The three knelt there and then at the table and the missionary poured out his soul in earnest prayer for the lost soul of that house. When he had finished, there was no Amen. He prayed again, and there was no response. He prayed a third time, until their hearts melted in the conscious presence of God, and a subdued Amen was heard. They parted in silence. That night the wretched husband could not sleep. Within four days he came drunk to the service, and before the end of the mission was mightily saved. The miracle of his conversion filled the town with wonder, for he had been notorious in his sin. Whose faith saved him? His relatives had given him up. The Church had abandoned him. He had long despaired of himself. Whose faith prevailed on his behalf?

III. VICARIOUS FAITH IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL PREVAILING INTERCESSION.

How often the Apostle Paul entreates the

prayers of his spiritual children! In one place he is confronted with a closed door, and is forbidden to preach the Gospel to souls that are perishing, and he requests the prayers of God's people that the door may be opened. In another case there is an open door, but there are many adversaries, and he asks them to pray that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified. What is such prayer but the vicarious operation of faith? Churches at his request pray and believe in his behalf. They believe, and it comes to pass.

The power of such prayer may be gathered from the promise of Christ to His people. "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven." Could any promise be more absolute? And yet the condition expressed in the agreement of two disciples goes deeper than at first appears. There is nothing arbitrary or mechanical in the conception. It is more than a mere contract; it is an agreement of soul. The word in the Greek means "to sound together like the answering note in musical instruments." A note struck on the piano will call forth a response from whatever is tuned to the same pitch. In wireless telegraphy, the sound wave travels through the ether till it meets

its answering note that can read its mystery, and receive its message. Such agreement assumes that the two have been brought into harmony by a common intelligence for a common purpose. We cannot pray and believe to order. Neither faith nor prayer is at the bidding of authority. We cannot believe merely because we are told we ought to believe, and that we shall be damned if we do not. Faith is possible only where the truth finds an answering note in the soul. Neither is there anything arbitrary in prayer. It is possible to pray only as the Spirit inspires in the soul correspondence to the will of God. He awakens the desire, creates the hunger, and directs the petition. When two souls are yielded to His absolute control, they find themselves in harmony with each other because both are in obedience to His will. Soul answers soul, sympathetic hearts find themselves in agreement, and together they plead at the Father's throne. To such agreement the promise never fails. Volumes might be written of the wonders wrought in answer to the united prayers of souls unified by the Holy Ghost, and not one case can be found where such prayer has been offered in vain.

One such occasion I can never forget. At the Southport Convention of 1896 the leaders met under the shadow of a great sorrow. Its Presi-

dent had been ill for most of the year, and had come to the Convention in great bodily weakness. He had completely lost his voice, and had not spoken in anything more than a whisper for months. Doctors with one consent declared he could never preach again. At one of the daily meetings of the speakers for prayer, without any arrangement or request, the prayers centred in the President. With one consent prayer was made that he might be restored, and that his voice might return. Within twenty-four hours he addressed an assembly of nearly two thousand people, and has continued to preach unto this day.

The wonderful revivals that have swept over the earth from time to time have been traced to a similar fellowship of prayer. Believers simultaneously burdened with the sins of the Church and the world have been drawn together, and agreed to give themselves to earnest intercession for the revival of God's work. The great revival in Ireland began with a few young men meeting early in the morning for prayer, because they felt the unutterable burden of perishing souls. In South Africa two young men left a Church one Sunday night full of grief because sinners were not converted. They sobbed out their burdened souls before God, and agreed to meet daily for prayer. The spirit

of prayer spread among the people, and hundreds of souls were turned to God. The Church, of which I was the first pastor, was built in answer to the continual prayer of a few people, and God brought a lonely widow more than twelve thousand miles to build it. Vicarious faith! It moves Omnipotence for the blessing and salvation of people who may be at the ends of the earth.

The Centurion's child was healed twenty-five miles away in the hour his father prayed. Whatever the explanation of the mystery of prayer, such coincidences are common in the lives of people who pray. Testimonies innumerable are borne to this twofold operation of the Spirit. At one place a soul in need pleading at the throne of grace, in another, a person ignorant of the need prompted to supply it. People moved to rise in the night or retire in the day to pray for others, have found afterwards that such persons were in special peril or in urgent need. There is not a follower of Christ who lives under the guidance of the Spirit, who has not experience of such blessings brought vicariously to others.

Faith reaches the perfection of its power in vicarious exercise. It seems in its concern for others to attain a Divine quality and to command Divine power. So long as it is centred upon

personal interests it is held in leash, but when it gets away from self, and is baptized with the God-like spirit of vicariousness, it rises to the fulness of its power, and commands the resources of the Eternal.

Doubtless some will say, surely there are limitations to this faith. If by limitations is meant conditions, then there are limitations. That for which faith is exercised must be in the will of God, and must be assured to the soul by the Spirit of God. The God who spake the promise and gives the faith understands all the mystery of the human will and the operation of natural law. The operation of Divine Sovereignty and the freedom of the human will are not irreconcilable to the wisdom of God. Our responsibility is not in the explanation of mystery, but in obedience to obligation and privilege. It is God's part to explain; it is ours to obey. The one thing common in all the examples where vicarious faith availed is the absence of resistance on the part of those who received the blessing. When men cease to resist and consent to receive, faith's triumph is achieved. How far the Spirit can influence the will, where lies the exact limit of man's freedom and God's power, no man can tell, but of this we are assured, that God never fails to fulfil a promise sealed to the faith of His child.

IV. THE LESSONS OF THE INCIDENT TO CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

The story of the man sick of the palsy abounds in valuable suggestions to those who are seeking to bring the hopeless and helpless to Jesus. Their work was beset with difficulties, as such work always is, and to watch their faith overcome them will do much to direct zeal and sustain faith. The first difficulty was with the man. He was palsied and unable to walk. If ever he was to be brought, he would have to be carried. One man's sympathy, determination, and faith were unequal to the task. What was impossible to one was possible to the united effort of four. One man's interest secured the help of three more. Faith binds men and unites their powers for a common purpose. Instead of brooding over the indifference and unbelief of the many, it seeks the fellowship and co-operation of those like-minded; instead of spending itself in criticism, it girds itself for its appointed task. It does not wait for the consent and applause of men, neither does it exhaust itself in discussion and scheming; it sees the work and does it, leaving others to discuss and criticise. Faith works, and vicarious faith works as well as believes for the blessing and salvation of others.

The real difficulties of these four men began when they got their man to the Church door.

When they reached the house where Jesus was the way was blocked; and in many places it is still blocked. The difficulty is not to get the harlot, the social leper, and the outcast to come where Jesus is, but to get the people who are gathered about His Name to receive them. The house to which they came was blocked because it was full, but there are many Churches empty enough inside, that are blocked in the door-way against the disreputable. The sinner's way to Christ is often blocked by good people—people who are interested in the Master's word and zealous for the Master's Name; people who pray earnestly for the salvation of men, and yet hinder their coming. In many places the greatest hindrance to Christian work is in Christian people. To be opposed from within is a severe trial to earnest faith. When you have succeeded in getting the man to come, and instead of being welcomed he is snubbed, it takes a more than ordinary supply of grace to be cheerful and civil. What is the use of praying and toiling to find the lost, while there are people in the Churches who would rather see them damned than let them share their pew? It is because the Church whines over the lost and scorns them, that the world refuses to believe its hypocrisies, and treats it with open contempt.

What is the duty of the earnest worker in the

presence of such a spirit ? Follow the example of these men. They stuck to their task. Any weakling can resign ; the man of faith holds on. Such men stiffen their backbone and hold their tongue. Do not argue with people that do nothing but sit and criticise. Keep your mind on your task and your eye on the Master. If one way fails, go quietly round and try another. Exhaust every ordinary and legitimate method to get your man to Christ. When all the ordinary ways have been proved impossible then make a new one. Tear up the roof, make a new departure ; never mind tradition and criticism ; do something costly, disturbing, and startling, rather than let souls laid upon your heart go down to perdition. Love is inventive, and faith persistent. The Church is saved by the irregularities of its men of faith. The Pharisees were angry but Christ was pleased. He commended their faith and honoured it. Others would have admired their courage, applauded their inventiveness, praised their perseverance, and commended the social and economic value of their work, but the thing that was precious to Jesus was their faith. The man who brings men in faith to Christ wins the approval of God. Every problem of human life finds its solution there. Healing follows forgiveness, and individual regeneration is the only way to social salvation.

What a reward these men had ! They saw the man they had brought made happy and strong. The man they had brought with his back on his bed went out with his back on his back praising and glorifying God. He was a happy man that day, but his happiness was as nothing to the happiness of the men who had believed for him and brought him. Christ had vindicated their faith, and set His seal upon the methods others had condemned. That was great cause for rejoicing ; but greater still was the joy of saving a brother. He who saves a soul drinks the very wine of God. We never know what the joy of the Lord is like till we have brought a lost soul to the feet of Jesus. Personal faith brings personal salvation, but vicarious faith brings salvation to others ; and in this also it is more blessed to give than to receive. The supreme test of faith is not its personal benefit but its vicarious power.

THE EXTRA MILE

“ Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil : but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.”—*S. Matt.* v. 38-42.

THE EXTRA MILE

THESE sayings of Jesus have been the cause of much difficulty to the Christian conscience. No man obeys them ; and yet no earnest Christian is quite at ease in ignoring them. In the estimation of Christ they are of vital importance, for they are the very qualities that give proof of sonship, and distinguish His followers from the rest of the world. Christians are to be known by the things in their life that are in excess of the claims of law, civilisation, and duty. Others demand restitution, recognition, and appreciation. The Christian resists not wrong, returns good for evil, and reflects the Divine character in the persistence of unappreciated goodness. These "extras" are the distinguishing marks of Christianity, and declare men to be sons of the Father which is in Heaven. If this is the estimate Christ puts upon these things, no follower of Christ can ignore them, and it is important we should understand and obey them.

S. Matthew's Gospel is the Gospel of the

Kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount is the manifesto of the King. It first sets forth the character of the citizen, and then proceeds to adjust the old order to the new life. We understand perfectly His treatment of the old law. There He teaches us that obedience to the letter is not enough. Sin is a question of spirit rather than action. Its offence is in the motive, not in the transgression ; in the attitude, not in the act. Hatred is murder, a lustful look is adultery, and extravagance of speech is of the Evil One. God judges by the heart. That is clear.

Then we come to those precepts which are in excess of law, and set forth the Christian's spirit in social life, and define his attitude to social wrongs. Resist not evil ; turn the other cheek to the smiter ; submit to injustice rather than go to law ; yield to the oppressor even in excess of his demand ; give to the beggar, and to the borrower, lend ; love your enemies ; pray for persecutors ; and do good to the evil and unthankful. Everything short of this is common civility and natural obligation. For those who are sons of God, the way of perfection is in the things that exceed the natural moralities of men, and the common civilities of polite society. It is the extras that make the Christian. The world looks for them. Mr. John Morley, in his *Life of Gladstone*, after speaking of certain phases of his life which

sprang from his Christian convictions, says, There was no worldly wisdom in it. *But, then, what are people Christians for?*

Now, we are asked, did Jesus mean what He said? If He did, where are the Christians? If He did not, then what did He mean?

I. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE CHRISTIAN EXTRA.

There is no doubt that the literal interpretation is the easiest and simplest. There is no real difficulty about turning the other cheek, giving your cloak to the man who steals your coat, going a second mile with the man who compels you to go the first. For the most part, the occasions for obedience in these things are exceedingly rare. Face-slapping, robbery, and compulsion are not common in a free country. Most people would go through life without ever being required to turn the other cheek. Even in giving and lending, literal obedience to the letter would not be difficult. Christian people would gladly surrender every possession if assured it was the will of God; but when they had given all, they would have placed themselves beyond the possibility of obedience. Men would still ask, and they would have nothing left to give. It is not the desire to shirk a difficult task that has led to the rejection of a literal interpretation of these words. The

Master has just been insisting upon obedience, not to the letter, but to the spirit of the law. Does He take away one letter to establish another? Is it not still an insistence upon the true spirit, beyond the region of law in the realm of social duty? Just as obedience to law must go beyond the letter to motive, affection, and desire, so our recognition of social duty must go beyond the exactions of society, the compulsions of necessity, and the civilities of custom. The Christian must be peaceable, inoffensive, meek, benevolent, trustful.

The difficulty of a literal interpretation is its inconsistency with Christ's other teaching, and His own example. He gave explicit directions to His disciples concerning their duty to people who wronged them, "And if thy brother sin against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the Church: and if he refuse to hear the Church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." Obedience to these instructions would save the Church much heart-burning and strife: but such obedience is very definite resistance of evil. It challenges the wrong-doer,

examines the offence, and punishes the offender. There are more ways of resistance than by force ; and in these directions of Christ the whole weight of the influence and authority of the Church is brought to bear upon the wrong-doer.

It is contrary to Christ's own example. He resisted evil, attacked wrong-doers, and when smitten did not turn the other cheek. When He went up to Jerusalem, He found the House of Prayer turned into a house of merchandise and a den of thieves. He made a scourge of small cords, and cast all out of the Temple, both sheep and oxen. He scattered the money of the traffickers, and overthrew their tables. On another occasion He drove them out, stopped the service, and refused to let any man carry a vessel through the Temple. That is more than passive resistance ; it is a vigorous aggression. In the Judgment Hall of Caiaphas one of the officers " struck Jesus with his hand, saying, " Answerest Thou the High Priest so ? " Jesus did not turn the other cheek. He challenged the smiter. " If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil ; but if well, why smitest thou Me ? " He did not answer force with force, blow with blow, but He exposed and rebuked the wrong, and certainly did not fulfil the letter of His own sayings.

S. John ii.
13-17.

S. Mark
xi. 15-17.

S. John
xviii. 22, 23.

The true interpretation is found in Christ's method of teaching. He taught by metaphor,

allegory, parable, and proverb; and each of these methods has its own law of interpretation. The command to cut off the right hand and pluck out the offending eye is manifestly metaphorical. It is a strong figure of speech, by which He teaches that nothing is to be spared to bring misused faculties into subjection to righteousness and holiness. When surgery is essential to life, there must be no hesitation. From metaphor He passes to proverb, and gives short proverbial directions on the Christian's manner of life, in the presence of the wrongs and needs of the world. Resist not evil is the general principle, and it is followed by specific occasions which illustrate its application.

Proverbs have a province and method all their own. "They embody," says Bishop Gore, "a principle of common, but not universal, application, in an absolute and extreme form." Consequently they have an appearance of mutual contradiction. Every proverb may be challenged by another proverb that flatly contradicts it, and yet both are true. Look at one or two. "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves." Be mindful of the trifles, and the great things will not need much attention. But in caring for pence men lose the capacity for dealing with pounds. They become pettifogging, absorbed in trifles, and ingenious in things of no

value. So there come such proverbs as : " Penny wise, pound foolish," and " Spoiling a ship for a pen'orth of paint." Settle the great fundamentals and broad principles, and leave details to fall naturally into place. Take another proverb : " Look before you leap," which means, Never try to jump a ditch till you have measured it ; never undertake anything till you have calculated all the forces, and counted all the difficulties. Very good advice ; but the people who are always measuring ditches never jump any. It is wonderful what critics they become, but they lose their capacity for initiative and enterprise. They can discover impossibilities but they never accomplish anything. So the proverb " Nothing venture, nothing have " goes right in the teeth of this prudent wisdom. Instead of stopping to measure the ditch, shut your eyes and jump. Better miss your jump than lose the capacity for daring. Take another : " Absence makes the heart grow fonder." It is delightful to think that through all the days of absence the heart's fires are kindling ; but if that were the whole truth, the longer the absence the greater would be the love, and return would probably remind us of another proverb : " Out of sight, out of mind." This contradictoriness of proverbs is due to their limitation of truth and absoluteness of form. They state a general but

not universal principle, as if it were the whole truth. Each speaks with authority, making no allowance for limitation or exception.

Christ's proverbs are no exception to this peculiarity. What does He say? "Resist not evil." That is simple, absolute, complete. It recognises no limitations and makes no allowance for exceptions. Yet Christ's own teaching and example show us that there are both limitations and exceptions. It is a principle of general but not universal application; and it is necessary to determine the extent of its obligation. To deduct from it a doctrine of absolute and universal non-resistance is to pervert its teaching, and to exalt the letter above the spirit. So long as the wrong is personal and private, it is a Christian's duty to bear it in the spirit of meekness; but when it is wrong done to others for whom we are responsible, resistance becomes a duty. If a man's child is in peril through the mad freak of human fiends, is he to stand by with placid patience and see it outraged and murdered? Is it not his duty to strike for his child? If non-resistance were absolute, there would be an end of discipline, civilisation, and organised life: anarchy would be rampant and destruction inevitable.

The prohibition against going to law is a sound rule of life. It is a man's wisdom, generally

speaking, to keep clear of litigation. S. Paul condemns the Corinthians because they took their contentions before the civil court. But is a man never to resort to law? Can we live and enjoy the social and civic privileges of a community, and ignore its obligations? Even though we may forgive an offence against our own property, have we no responsibility to our neighbours? Are we at liberty to turn loose upon society men who will plunder its property and imperil its security? There are times when the plain duty of a Christian is to hand a law-breaker over to law. Does the command to give and to lend impose indiscriminate charity as a Christian duty? Ought we to give to every one that asks, and lend to every man that would borrow? One of the curses of the land is the indiscriminate charity of good people. The Scriptural rule is, "If any will not work, neither let him eat," and it is no part of a Christian's duty to provide for men too lazy to work. What it does mean is that possessions are to be held in stewardship for God, and at the disposal of a brother's need. "Whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?"

2 Thess. iii.
10.

1 John iii.
17

Exceptions do not excuse a rule, but prove it. Care must be taken lest in turning from the

letter we lose also the spirit. These commands are binding. The follower of Christ must be a man of peace, meekly enduring wrong, suffering loss, enduring hardship, full of compassion and simple faith. A contentious spirit, full of wrangling, always on the defence, is not Christian. Going to law as a rule is neither seemly nor wise. Good must be returned for evil, for only by good can evil be overcome, and our business is not the punishment of sinners but their salvation. Our service must not be grudgingly rendered, but cheerfully and in excess of necessity. Our stewardship must be a reality, and the needs of the unfortunate supplied, hoping for all, and despairing of none. Such was the life of our Lord, and such also must be ours.

II. THE EXAMPLE OF THE EXTRA MILE.

Let us look at the command concerning the extra mile as an example of the spirit of the Christian life. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain." The reference is to public transport service. Roman troops had power to requisition able-bodied men. Marching through a district, they could compel a man to act as porter or guide within a certain area or limit. Such service was not popular. The Government was alien and hated. Often the demand was inconvenient as well as laborious,

and was apt to be rendered in a reluctant and complaining spirit. Christ's command is that even when service is compulsory and unreasonable it should not be rendered in a sullen and slavish spirit, but readily, cheerfully, and in excess of the demand. Such compulsions are happily far removed from the modern conditions of life. There remain but few occasions when we can be impressed into unwilling service in the interests of the State. But compulsory service is still with us. In every life there are circumstances that force to unwelcome tasks. Every man has duties that are undertaken not of choice but of necessity. They are the measured mile we are compelled to travel, and the Master says they are not to be undertaken in a spirit of angry rebellion or sullen repining, to be growled at and groaned under, but in a spirit of cheerfulness that is ready to give double the demand. Compulsions are to be regarded as opportunities, and the drudgeries of life as elect angels whose compulsion is of God. Thus life is to be stripped of its irksomeness, its sullen spirit is to be lost in cheerfulness, and its hardships in the spirit of enthusiasm. The bitterness of the first mile is to be cured by adding a second.

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS NOT THE RELIGION OF THE MEASURED MILE.

It was the religion of the Pharisee. With him

everything was measured, and with scrupulous care he sought to meet its exact demands. It was a religion of law expressed in hard and fast regulations, to which he gave a cold and calculating obedience down to the utmost minutiae of life. Jesus hated the Pharisee's religion. He abhorred its slavish spirit, its mechanical exactness, its measured precision, and said of it: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The measured mile made the Pharisee; it is the extra mile that makes the Christian. The yardstick is broken in the Kingdom of Heaven; its religion is that which revels in excess of legal demands, and delights in obedience without measure.

ALL VIRTUE BEGINS WITH THE EXCESS OF NECESSITY.

There can be no virtue in compulsory obedience. If a thing is done because it cannot be helped, what reward is there? If obedience is yielded only to force, what merit is there in obedience? If the march is at the point of a bayonet, there is no room to boast over the marching. If we trot only to escape the prod, it is hardly reasonable to speak of the necessity as a virtue. The value and preciousness of virtue are in its voluntariness. There is

no virtue in necessity, no religion in compulsion, no credit in obedience that has no choice. That principle underlies all the relationships of life. There is nothing precious anywhere till the region beyond necessity and compulsion has been reached. In service it is the extra that tells. So long as service scrupulously measures its mile its wages are its reward. At the stroke of the clock the hireling fleeth because he is a hireling. He may be conscientious, exact, and scrupulous in the discharge of his duty, but the day you can dispense with him you will dismiss him. It is the service not in the contract that makes it precious; service rendered not for pay, but under the inspiration of love. The sacredness of toil begins where the compulsion of wages ends.

It is the same in friendship. There is a measured mile of propriety, self-respect, and social obligation. It is regulated by the demands of society for civility, courtesy, and etiquette. The less real the friendliness, the more frigid and careful is the observance of its rules. We never take liberties with strangers. Friendship that is always exact and under constraint has neither worth nor soul. True friendship begins where the compulsion of propriety ends, and conventionalities are lost in the freedom of mutual enthusiasm and affection. Second-mile friend-

ship is the most precious thing in the world. It does not consider exactions, but leaps with joy to every opportunity of service. Must is lost in may, and sacrifice is its highest joy.

If this be true in things human, how much more must it be true in things divine? In religion, above all, it is true that its value and preciousness are in its freedom and spontaneity. So long as ought and must are the forces behind our worship and service, it is profitless to us and an abomination to God. While God is regarded as a hard Master, exacting His due with merciless precision, we shall find in religion neither joy nor power. The test is in the extra mile. Many keep their religion at the irreducible minimum. They pray as much as they must to escape being lost, go to worship as much as they are obliged for the maintenance of their religious respectability, and give no more than is necessary to save their reputation. God hates the irreducible minimum, and scorns the gift brought out of necessity, and for the sake of reputation. He keeps His eye on the extra. He loves hilarity in worship and service. The grudging spirit and compulsory service He will not have. Temple-treading, studied attitudes, and polished platitudes He abominates as mockery and hypocrisy. He seeks soul, not machinery; the love of sons, not the cringing obedience of slaves.

THERE IS NO WAY OF REACHING THE SECOND MILE EXCEPT OVER THE FIRST.

We cannot begin at the second ; it is a continuation of the first, and the first must be done before the second can be begun. Spontaneity and delight are reached through fidelity to the compulsions and necessities of duty. The servants in the Parable of the Talents did not enter into the joy of their Lord until they had proved their faithfulness to the obligations of their trust. They had toiled with no other incentive than a good conscience, and the hope of commendation when their Lord should return. The way to the paradise of joy is by the rugged path of duty. It is the reward of discipline and perseverance. It is so in everything. There is often a toilsome stage of drudgery about half way across the measured mile. When Joash, King of Israel, came to see the dying prophet, he was commanded to take bow and arrows and shoot out of the window facing eastwards ; then he was commanded to take the arrows and smite upon the ground. He smote thrice, and stayed. The dying Elisha was wroth with him for stopping at the third stroke instead of going on to the sixth. We are not told how many strokes are necessary for complete conquest, but we usually manage to stop half way. One, is struck with enthusiasm ; two, from a sense of duty ; three, of necessity ;

S. Matt.
xxv. 14-23

2 Kings
xiii. 14-19

and then we seek an excuse to stop. Most people fail about half way; they stop short of mastery, and never find the ease and joy of efficiency sustained by enthusiasm. Who does not know the drudgery stage in music, where unmusical scales have to be practised by the hour? In languages there is the dreary toil of irregular forms and the technique of idioms. The artist and the nurse, the tradesman and the professor, the soldier and the scholar, have all to go over the measurements, regulations, and compulsions of the initiatory mile. The religion of the Pharisee was good as far as it went; its fault was that it did not go far enough. "Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone."

Never shirk an irksome task. "The surest way to escape a difficulty is to face it plump." The man who will not master the things that are hard to him, can never come to skill and delight in his task. It is through the compulsions of the first mile we reach the joys of the second. We must learn to obey law if we would be free, and to serve if we would be fit to rule. Duty is the first word, though it is not the last.

The spirit in which the first mile is travelled will decide whether we ever walk the second. If

the mile of necessity is accomplished at the point of the bayonet, the moment the point is withdrawn the march will end. The traveller that is rebellious and reluctant will never go an extra yard.

The Second Mile is reached by doubling the first. Whatever the exaction of a difficult or irksome task, double it. If it demands an hour as a minimum, give it two ; if three strokes will just do it, give it six. One day I sat reading in the corner of a room where a girl was brought, pouting, for her music practice. She was compelled to play for an hour every day. The piano was opened, after much trouble the stool was adjusted, and, limp and listless, she began her task. Every few minutes she stopped to look at the clock, and twice went to see if it had not stopped. The moment the hour struck, bang went the piano and away she scampered. Clerks and workmen leave their tasks often with a similar sigh of relief. Such never get to the Second Mile. They spend all their days in the incompetence and joyless drudgery of the first.

The same rule holds in religion and morals. Perfection, power, and joy are found in the voluntary excess of legal exaction. The man who doubles what is generally acknowledged to be sufficient is the man who discovers the secret

of holy and happy religion. If for prayer and meditation an hour is necessary, add a second and you shall have power with God and prevail. If giving a tenth is duty that taxes the generous instincts of the soul, double it, and giving will become a delight. By exceeding the measure the sense of exaction is lost. Adding the voluntary to the compulsory delivers the soul from the necessity for compulsion. That is the way to lose the duty in the joy.

In this way the spirit of the Second Mile is anticipated in the first. Hard work done for pleasure is never a burden. Recreation would be toil if it were compulsory. By the same law compulsion may become delight, and drudgery a pleasure, if undertaken in a free spirit, and inspired by a great motive. The spirit of consecration that accepts all duties as in the Father's will, all drudgery as opportunity, and all exaction as privilege, will turn repining into gladness, and set the Decalogue to music.

This is the spirit of the Children of God. Not a resentful, contentious spirit, striving for its rights, and repining over its wrongs; not a mechanical or grudging obedience to the exactions of unwelcome duty, without exhilaration, graciousness, or power; not a hard, unsympathetic, unbelieving greed in the presence of misfortune and want; but a spirit that suffers

meekly, serves cheerfully, and ministers joyfully is the spirit of the Christian life. This is the only religion that either God or man believes in ; and the only religion by which the world can be saved.

THE CHRISTIAN BENEDICTION

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.”—
2 Corinthians xiii. 14.

THE CHRISTIAN BENEDICTION

THIS threefold invocation is familiarly known as the Christian Benediction. The Old Testament form of blessing was authorised to be used in the assemblies of Israel, but there is nothing to indicate that these words were ever intended for regular use in the gatherings of the Christian Church. They have been chosen for universal use because of their appropriateness ; for they are both a confession of the Christian faith, and a declaration of Christian privilege. The Benediction of the New Covenant marks a great advance upon that of the Old. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel ; ye shall say unto them :

*Num. vi.
22-27.*

“The Lord bless thee and keep thee :

“The Lord make His face to shine upon thee,
and be gracious unto thee :

“The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee,
and give thee peace :

“So shall they put my name upon the children of Israel ; and I will bless them.”

In that Name put upon the children of Israel, everything is omitted that makes the Name of God distinctively Christian. There is no mention of the Divine Fatherhood, the Divine Son, or the Divine Spirit. Neither is there any mention of the love of God, the grace of Christ, or the communion of the Holy Ghost. It conveys no sense of nearness, but gives the impression that God is remote, transcendental, and majestic, who graciously condescends to bless Israel His people. The Christian Benediction brings God near in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. It sets forth,—

- I. THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD.
- II. THE CHRISTIAN REALISATION OF GOD.
- III. THE CHRISTIAN MANIFESTATION OF GOD.

I.

The revelation of God was necessarily a slow development. To gird at the imperfections and limitations of the Old Testament is to misunderstand the nature of the revelation, and to ignore the only possible method of education. The revelation was to the consciousness of the Nation, and had to be accommodated to the moral and spiritual capacity of the people. The coming of Christ waited for the fulness of time, and as with

Christ, so with truth. The God of discrimination sent forth His light and truth as men were prepared to receive it. There are those who cannot understand why the Sermon on the Mount was not preached at Sinai, and why the world was kept waiting for ages for the Gospel of Christ. They are perplexed because the Scriptures represent God associated with things that shock our moral sense, and forget that the revelation of God came through the troubled history of an ancient people. God could only reveal as they were able to bear. Even Jesus had to close His ministry with many things unspoken, because the disciples could not receive them. The history of Israel is virtually the history of the educational process, by which they came to the knowledge of God. He declared Himself in mighty deeds rather than in words; through long ages He chastened them, and sent His prophets to interpret His name through their experience. Thus, slowly and through much tribulation, they came to know the Lord.

The first thing to be learned was the falseness of Polytheism and Idolatry. They came out from a land that worshipped an elaborate system of deities, and were surrounded by worshippers of false gods. The heathen multiplied gods according to their fears. The snare of Israel was idolatry. Every new crisis renewed the temptation

to establish deities like other nations. An invisible God lacked location and tangibility. Spiritual worship makes demands of a high order on the intelligence and moral powers of the worshipper, and it is not surprising that Israel was so ready to lapse into the worship of idols. The one great declaration to the delivered people, therefore, was, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." The two first commandments aimed at the preservation of the people from false gods and idolatry. "I am the Lord thy God . . . Thou shalt have none other gods beside Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth : thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them nor serve them." It took Israel thousands of years to learn the lesson of those two commandments. The one great truth of the Old Testament revelation is the unity of God.

When this was achieved, there came into view indications of distinctions within the one God. The use of the plural pronoun may not be a conclusive argument, but taken in conjunction with other considerations it is at least significant and suggestive. In Isaiah's vision it would be hazardous to base a doctrine of primary importance upon the Seraphim's threefold ascription of praise, but when the cleansed soul of the Prophet hears "the

Deut. vi. 4.

Exod. xx. 2-5.

Isa. vi.

THE CHRISTIAN BENEDICTION 341

voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for *Us* ? ”, it is calculated to provoke inquiry as to the meaning of the change from the singular to the plural number. Still more suggestive is the presence in the Old Testament of a Godlike being, distinct from Jehovah, to whom is attributed the qualities and operations of Divinity. The Angel of Jehovah, the Son of God, and the Divine Wisdom have each the attributes of God. These are glimmerings of the fuller revelation, but their meaning was not known till they were interpreted in the light of Christian truth. Every Old Testament saint was Unitarian.

The Christian revelation comes to us through Jesus Christ. The communication of the truth concerning God is no longer confined to the prompting of men's minds, but is revealed in the Person of the Son of God. He came to reveal the Father, and declared that only He could reveal Him. At the close of His ministry He claimed to have accomplished His Mission. He said to Philip, “ He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father ” ; and to God He said, “ I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. . . . I manifested Thy Name . . . and I made known unto them Thy Name.” That manifestation involves a Trinity of Persons in the One God. The word Trinity is not found in the Scriptures, nor is the doctrine

S. John
xiv. 9.

S. John
xvii. 4, 6,
26.

of the Trinity formally stated. The Scriptures do not systematise doctrine; they furnish data and leave the work of systematising to others. But the Trinity lies at the foundation of all New Testament teaching. Jesus claimed to be equal with God, and spoke of the Spirit as Personal and Divine, and yet there are not three Gods, but One. The Apostles everywhere proclaim His doctrine, and recognise the threefold distinction in the Persons of the One God. The equal Deity of the Son and Spirit with the Father is the mystery and the glory of the Gospel they preach.

The Benediction stands closely linked with the Baptism of Jesus and the Baptismal formula He gave to His disciples.

John the Baptist came preaching repentance toward God, faith in a Coming One who should take away the sin of the world, and in the Holy Ghost who should be given by the Son of God. When Jesus came to be baptized of him in Jordan, S. John recognised Him as "the Son of God," by the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him. At the same moment the Father bare witness, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Father gave, and the Son received the Holy Ghost. The Father in the Heavens declared the Divine Sonship of the Christ, and the Spirit proceeding from the Father to the Son, afterward to be also the gift of the Son, is equally

S. John
i. 34.

S. Matt.
iii. 17.

a Person, and equally Divine with the Father and the Son.

Christ's reception of the Spirit was the call and equipment of God for His Messianic ministry.

As He was sent, so He sends. "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." "All authority hath been given unto Me in Heaven and on

S. John xx.
21, 22.

earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

S. Matt.
xxviii.
18, 19.

Baptism into the Name means baptism unto God, and the Name of God in the new covenant is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is the culmination of Christ's teaching concerning God. He ordained it for all time to be the initiating confession of faith for all who would enter His kingdom. It is the formula with which all believers are to be received into the fellowship of Christ, and like all such formulæ it sets forth the fundamental doctrine of the Christian ecclesia. It is the basis of all Christian doctrine and the universal confession of the Christian faith. "I believe in God the Father . . . and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord . . . I believe in the Holy Ghost." Three Persons, One God.

In the Benediction S. Paul invokes the Trinity as the Source of Grace, Love, and Commu-

nion. Its unique features must not be overlooked. The order is unusual; and the Names used are unusual. He places the Son before the Father. He does not speak of them as Son, Father, and Spirit, but as the Lord Jesus Christ, God, and the Holy Ghost. The explanation of these things is found in the fact that this is not a Doxology, not primarily a confession of faith, but a Benediction. A Doxology is an ascription of praise; a Benediction is a word of blessing. One ascends from the heart of man to God, the other descends from God to man. Consequently the Benediction does not approach the subject from the standpoint of theology, but of experience. It is not concerned with definition, nor does it contemplate the glory of God in the absoluteness of His Deity, but it sets Him forth as He is realised in the soul. The process is in this order. We come to the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ, and the Spirit is the gift of both the Father and the Son. It is through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we come to the knowledge of the love of God, and it is by grace and love we enter into the life of communion with the Holy Ghost. No other order is possible. To sinful men there can be no love apart from grace, and fellowship is impossible without love. God is always revealed as He is involved in His relation to the world and the human race, and here He is revealed as He

becomes known to the soul in the process of salvation through faith in His name. The Christian knows God only in and through the Man Christ Jesus. He thinks of God in the terms of Christ, comes to God through the grace of Christ, and lives in fellowship with God through the Spirit of Christ.

II

This Benediction sums up the blessings of Christian privilege in the three great words of the Gospel—GRACE : LOVE : COMMUNION.

These three gifts of God are attributed to different Persons in the Trinity. Grace is attributed to our Lord Jesus Christ, Love to God, and Communion to the Holy Ghost. There is a distinction of functions as well as of Persons in the Godhead. Each takes precedence in His own peculiar work, and there seem to be distinct limitations in the operation of each. We cannot trace the limits, and must be careful lest we divide to our hurt, and conceive of God as Three and not One. Each belongs to All. Grace is of God and of the Spirit as well as of the Son. Love is of the Son and of the Spirit as well as of the Father. Our communion is with the Father and the Son as well as with the Spirit. Grace, Love, and Communion are of the One God, as Father, Son, Spirit is the One Name of God. But in

the economy of Redemption, Grace comes to us through Jesus, Love is of the Father, and Communion by the Holy Ghost. These distinctions interpret Christian experience, and are necessary to its existence.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The word grace is S. Paul’s token in every Epistle. Eight of them close with the Benediction, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you,” sometimes varying the form to “with your spirit.” The fuller Benediction is the development of what is involved in the abiding of grace. It leads to the consciousness of love and the life of communion ; it is the great word of the Gospel of Christ. It is more than mercy and greater than love. Justice demands integrity, mercy is the ministry of pity, love seeks correspondence, appreciation and responsiveness, but grace demands no merit ; it flows unrestrained and undeserved upon those who have no goodness to plead, and no claim to advance. Grace seeks the unfit and the unworthy. It is love, mercy, and compassion stretching out towards the guilty, ungracious and rebellious. It is the only hope for sinful men. If salvation come not by grace, it can never be ours. Without grace, there can be no reconciliation, no pardon, no peace. We are saved by grace. “God commendeth His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Re-

demption originated in that disposition of the Divine mind. It was by the grace of God Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, and it is to the same grace every man owes his salvation. It begins in grace, is continued in grace, and is perfected in grace. At no stage is it of works ; it is a gift of God, the outflowing of His grace.

In the New Testament use of the word it passes from an attribute of the Divine character to an active energy in the soul. At the Throne of Grace we “ find grace to help us in time of need.” The heart is “ stablished by grace,” and by grace “ we may offer service well-pleasing to God.” It is in “ the grace that is in Christ Jesus ” that we find our strength, and we are assured of its sufficiency for endurance as well as for service “ My grace is sufficient for thee.” We are commanded to “ grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” These passages all speak of the Divine influence in the soul as the operation of grace, and regard that which has its source in the grace of God as the working power of salvation. Grace pardons the guilty, restores the fallen, delivers the captive, sanctifies the sinner, sustains and perfects the believer.

This grace is always connected with “ our Lord Jesus Christ.” He is the manifestation of God, full of grace and truth. Grace is His glory. The

Heb. iv. 16.

Heb. xiii. 9.

Heb. xii. 28.

2 Tim. ii. 1.

2 Cor. xii. 9.

2 Pet. iii. 18.

love of God is revealed to men in the grace of Christ, and the grace of God will be for ever the grace of Christ. That is why His Name takes precedence in the form of blessing. It is by the grace He brings that every other gift of God becomes possible to men. Love is without meaning for us apart from grace, and fellowship is impossible without a basis of love. This is the reason also for the choice of the human and not the Divine name of our Lord. The manifestation of grace is through the Man Christ Jesus. It is made known to us in His life of sinless obedience, His ministry of compassion, His suffering and death. It is through the grace of God embodied and revealed in Christ that we come to the knowledge of the Father.

“And the love of God.” It does not invoke the love of the Father, but of God. He is contemplated in the completeness of His Being, and the Name is used which includes all relationships. The Christian revelation concerning Him is that He is Love. From everlasting to everlasting God is Love. Does not the fact of Eternal Love involve personal subjects and objects of love within the Godhead? Is it possible to conceive of love absolutely unrelated? It was Eternal Love that gave the gift of the Eternal Son. Love was behind grace, and grace made way for love. Christ brings us to the Father, and makes known to us the

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love of God. "Love could not flow to us save through the grace of atonement; and the grace of atonement could not flow to us save through the love of God." Realisation of the love of God in the redeeming work of grace brings the conscious experience of the love of God to the soul. The love of God is shed abroad in the heart through the Holy Ghost. The general love of God for the world becomes through faith a personal and conscious possession. The barriers of the soul disappear, all sense of distance and alienation is lost, every shrinking fear and haunting dread is cast out, and the heart finds its rest and home in God. It is useless to attempt to define or describe the consciousness of love, for it passeth knowledge. It cannot be known except through personal experience. The secret of love is revealed only to love. Every one that receives the grace knows the love. "And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him." Love is peculiarly attributed to God, as grace is associated with Jesus Christ, though it is of the love of Christ it is said that "it passeth knowledge," and God is called the God of grace.

Rom. v 5.

1 John iv.
16.

"And the communion of the Holy Ghost." Grace leads to love, and love opens the way to communion. As grace is through Jesus Christ and

love is of God, so communion is with the Holy Ghost. The Spirit is the gift of both the Father and the Son, and is Himself the Giver of each.

1 Cor. xii. 3.

Rom. v. 5.

“No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit”; and if “the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts,” it is “through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us.” The Spirit is always revealed as the immediate Agent in the communication of God to the soul. It is He who convicts and converts, assures and inspires, equips and strengthens. In the Christian kingdom He is the Paraclete, who abides with us for ever. His abiding presence in the soul is the result of accepted grace and realised love. The end of Redemption is realised in conscious communion with God through the Holy Ghost.

Communion is a great word. It means COMPANIONSHIP, PARTNERSHIP, CO-OPERATION. Communion is heart to heart fellowship, where without speech soul blends with soul. Company does not make companionship, it is the subtle consciousness of affinity and mutual love that gives the sense of intimacy. But it is more than companionship. The word implies a common possession; a mutual proprietorship as well as mutual affection. The communion of the Holy Ghost means partnership with Him. We share with Him the things of God. We are joint-possessors with Him of the wisdom, power, and

glory of God. He associates us in all things with Himself. Every resource of the Infinite He brings without reserve to the commonwealth of God. We are partners in the work of the Spirit as well as in His possessions. Salvation is the work of both man and God. Man works out his own salvation, but the Spirit works in him both the willing and the doing of the Divine good pleasure. The work of the kingdom is the united work of redeemed men and the Spirit of God. We are workers together with Him. He clothes Himself with men, takes possession of their powers, directs their energies, and through them works mightily in the world for the destruction of sin and the glory of Christ. He is with us in the secret experiences of the heart, our Companion, Helper, and Friend ; we are with Him in the participation of every gift of God, and in active co-operation in the glorious work of salvation.

This is the Benediction of God to man : Grace, Love, Communion. Grace through Jesus Christ, love from God, and communion with the Holy Ghost. This is the order of the Divine process. Through Christ to God and through both to the abiding Presence of the Spirit ; through grace to love, and through love to the life of Divine communion.

III

In what sense and to what end may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be said to be with us ? It cannot mean less than a conscious personal Presence. The invocation cannot seek grace, love, and communion as gifts apart from the Persons, in whom alone they are to be found. Neither grace, love, nor communion can have any reality apart from personality. We cannot give love and withhold ourselves ; there cannot be communion without mutual exchange. The prayer cannot be for anything less than for the conscious presence of God in the soul. Jesus teaches that the Father, Son, and Spirit are all equally present in the soul of the believer. Speaking of the Spirit He says, " He abideth with you, and shall be in you " ; of Himself and the Father He saith, " If a man love Me, he will keep My word : and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make our abode with him." The Personality is neither lost nor confused. They come distinctly as Father, Son, and Spirit, but One Lord. Jesus dwells in man the source of all grace, God abides in him the spring and perfection of all love, and the Holy Spirit communes with him and energises for all

S. John xiv.
17, 23.

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the will of God. Man is indwelt of the Triune God and dwells in Him.

What is the purpose of this Indwelling? It is by this Divine Presence in the soul that the work of man's salvation is accomplished. God cannot save man from a distance. Salvation must come from within; and God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit achieve man's restoration to holiness and fellowship by coming and dwelling in his heart. Grace, love, and communion save from within. They bring provision for every need. Grace covers the whole area of sin. It pardons the past, and delivers the sinner from his sin. There is no habit or condition over which grace cannot prevail. The love of God assured to the soul meets every problem of Providence. Faith can always wait for love that is consciously assured. Communion with the Spirit brings every needful gift for service and for prayer. There is no want of the life, nor no hunger of the heart that is not met, in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. If these abide with us, we shall never fail nor want for any good thing.

The purpose is more than personal. God dwells in men that they may become one with Himself: like Him in mind and heart, like Him in character and purpose, like Him in spirit and work. The Christian reflects his God. The

qualities he finds in Him, he manifests in himself. The recipients of grace become “stewards of the manifold grace of God.” It is given for ministering as well as for perfecting. “God is able to make all grace abound unto you ; that ye having always all-sufficiency in everything may abound unto every good work.” The grace by which Jesus Christ tasted death for every man is intended to produce a like spirit of sacrifice in us. “Because He laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” If the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us, it will work in us as it worked in Him. They that know the love of God must live the life of love. If we say the Love of God is with us and we walk contrary to love, we are liars, and know not the truth. The God of love dwells in us that we may live the life of Godlike love. So it is also with the communion of the Spirit. He does not share with us His riches that we may hoard them, or endue us with His power that we may spend it on ourselves. The companionship, partnership, and co-operation into which He brings us is intended to send us forth with like privileges to others. The threefold Benediction is to abide with us that its threefold grace may be manifested in us, and the presence of its Three-One God demonstrated through us. All are included in the blessing, and none are omitted from the purpose.

1 Pet. iv.
10.

2 Cor. ix.
8.

1 John iii.
16.

1 John iv.
20, 21.

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The Benediction defines the mission of the Church of God. It is a brotherhood by the grace of Christ, living in the love of God, and realising the spirit of communion in the Holy Ghost. Its symbol is a simple meal of commemoration, which celebrates the supreme act of grace and looks forward to its final triumph in the return of its Lord. It is a family gathering of the Brotherhood of Christ where all other considerations disappear. They dwell in the love of God, and from the beginning the reality of both the grace and love has been demonstrated in the spirit of loving and practical fellowship. Grace, love, and communion are the signs of the Divine Presence in the Christian Church.

The message of the Church to the world is the message of the Benediction. Its gospel is a gospel of grace to the lost ; the burden of its message is the love of God ; and it calls all men to the communion of the Spirit and the fellowship of them that believe. It brings its Good Tidings to the worthless and the unfit. Others preach the doctrine of self-righteousness and self-reliance ; we preach a doctrine of grace which brings uttermost salvation to the uttermost sinners. Grace, Love, Fellowship ! The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost ; that is the Gospel and the power by which the world is to be restored and saved.

Man finds his destiny in an Indwelling Divinity, and in the practice of the Divine qualities of Grace, Love, and Communion. This is man's way to his destined divinity: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

1 1012 01146 0591

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